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CARPENTER'S WORLD TRAVELS

—

Familiar Talks About Countries and Peoples

WITH THE AUTHOR ON THE SPOT AND
THE READER IN HIS HOME, BASED
ON THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND MILES OF TRAVEL
OVER THE GLOBE

"READING CARPENTER IS SEEING THE WORLD"

MEXICO, OUR TURBULENT NEIGHBOUR

"As I stood on the bridge in the middle of the Rio Grande astride the international boundary line I noticed that my left leg trembled a little, perhaps for fear another revolution would break out before I could get both feet back into Uncle Sam's domain."

CARPENTER'S WORLD TRAVELS

MEXICO

319

BY

FRANK G. CARPENTER

LITT. D., F. R. G. S.

WITH 123 ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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While nearly all of the illustrations in Carpenter's World Travels are from my own negatives, those in this book have been supplemented by photographs from Hugo Brehme and the Mexican National Railways, Mexico City; the United States War Department, the Pan-American Union, George F. Weeks, and Frederick Simpich, Washington; and the Richardson Pratt Carter Oil Company and Richard Levering Company, New York and Mexico.

F. G. C.

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MEXICO

MEXICO

CHAPTER I

JUST A WORD BEFORE WE START

MY TRAVELS in this book remind me of the Hindoo who lusted for diamonds. He had a small farm in Madras which he sold that he might hunt for these precious stones. He travelled far and wide over the world and at last returned home to learn that the Kohinoor, then the largest and finest diamond ever discovered, had been found on his own little farm. And so for many years I had travelled over the world, seeking the diamonds of human interest, before I discovered that one of the rarest of all countries in this respect lay almost under my feet.

This country is Mexico, a land as picturesque and as full of strange customs, strange sights, and strange peoples as any in Europe. No billowy ocean with its horrid seasickness needs be sailed in order to visit it. It lies at our very front doors and can be reached in comfortable sleepers which run every day. The only water between us is the little Rio Grande, and a trip of two or three days takes one into a world of new scenes.

The past of Mexico is of unceasing interest. Again and again the traveller stumbles on relics that indicate a history quite as interesting as that of the Old World from which we came.

Long before the expedition of the Pilgrim Fathers was planned, Cortes and his soldiers had appeared in the land of the Aztecs and discovered there a civilization that compared well with their own. They found Montezuma reigning in a healthful city which a retinue of street cleaners swept and watered daily so that, in the words of an old Spaniard, "a man could walk through it with as little danger of soiling his feet as his hands." The city was washed on all sides by a brackish lake, but pure water was piped into the fountains and fed the reservoirs of its noblemen's houses from a sweet spring on a lofty hill three miles away. The king lived in royal pomp in a huge building erected without a nail, its ceiling inlaid with cedar and other sweet-smelling woods.

The Mexico of to-day is a world in itself. It has a population of fifteen millions, of whom more than two fifths are pure-blooded Indians of various tribes. These Indians cannot read or write, and in many respects their civilization is lower than was that of the Aztecs when the Spanish conquerors came. There are also about a million creoles, or whites of pure Spanish lineage, who call themselves Mexicans, and between these two elements are the *mestizos,* or mixed bloods, the result of intermarriage of Spaniards and Indians. They are the leaders of the Mexico of to-day.

Away down south in the State of Yucatan is a race distinct from the other Indians of Mexico. It is the Mayas, an ancient people, which was ruled, but never was conquered. They have seventeen different dialects of the same tongue. They are the direct descendants of the

Countless churches stand to-day as monuments to the handful of Spanish soldiers and priests, who conquered a vast empire, converted a whole people to Christianity, and gave them a new language.

We are to visit a land of cities built by Spaniards when our country was young. The soil is rich and the surrounding mountains are storehouses of treasure, yet progress comes slowly and poverty is the rule.

semi-civilized people who, long, long before the advent of the Spaniards, built the wonderful ruined cities of Uxmal and Chichenitza. The mysterious characters on their temples and doorways long baffled the most expert archæologists. Many of the manuscripts stored in these temples, which might have thrown light on the Mayan civilization, were destroyed by the Spaniards.

These are some of the human aspects of the field of our travels. Let us now look at its physical side. There are only four other republics on this hemisphere that have as much land. Mexico is equal to the whole United States east of the Mississippi River with the exception of the states of Michigan and Illinois, and its coast line on the Atlantic and the Pacific is so long that if its parts could be joined, it would extend from San Francisco to London and leave some to spare. It would more than reach from Los Angeles to Manila. The country is about as long as from New York to Salt Lake City, and its breadth at the top is equal to the distance from Philadelphia to Indianapolis.

The land is shaped like a huge horn, with its roots fastened to the United States, and the tip in Yucatan. The horn is bedded in the two oceans; it slopes from both sides to the top where are ridges with great mountains upholding a vast rolling tableland that is for the most part a mile above the sea. The mountains comprise some of the highest on the continent, Mount Orizaba being eighteen thousand feet in height and Popocatepetl only a few hundred feet lower. Mexico has volcanoes as lofty as Pike's Peak, the names of which we hardly know, and it has more than fifteen ranging from two to three and one-half miles in altitude.

On the plateau for most of the year the climate is like that of Ohio in June. The air is as pure as the winter winds sweeping over Egypt from the Libyan Desert, and Greece can furnish no more beautiful skies.

From the coasts up to about three thousand feet the country is hot, with an average annual temperature of from 76° to 88° Fahrenheit. The temperate lands lie along the mountain slopes and in the lower plateaus, at between three thousand and sixty-five hundred feet elevation, a zone that embraces most of the northern deserts. In the *tierra fría*, or cold country, which is cold only by comparison with the coast lands, are included the high plateaus and the mountains, that part of Mexico lying between sixty-five hundred and twelve thousand five hundred feet of altitude. Here the thermometer averages from 30° to 60°. About half of the inhabitants live in this cool belt.

During my trips to Mexico I have travelled over the whole mighty plateau. Upon it the air is so clear that one can see miles farther than in the eastern parts of the United States, and it is so filled with ozone that one seems to be breathing champagne. The skies appear closer to the earth than at home, the moon has more brilliancy, and the diamond-like stars remind me of the luminous heavens which hang low at night over the Amazon or the Gulf of Siam.

Mexico has two seasons: the wet, from June to September, and the dry, from October to May. Most travellers prefer to come during the winter, but the Mexicans themselves, especially those who live in the capital, like the summer, which is the healthiest time of the year. Then daily showers of refreshing rain water the streets and flush out the sewers. Immediately after each shower the sun comes out and the atmosphere so quickly takes up the moisture that the streets are soon dry. Throughout the winter there are clear and cloudless days and all the year round in Mexico City and other places on the plateau the cool nights call for a pair of warm blankets.

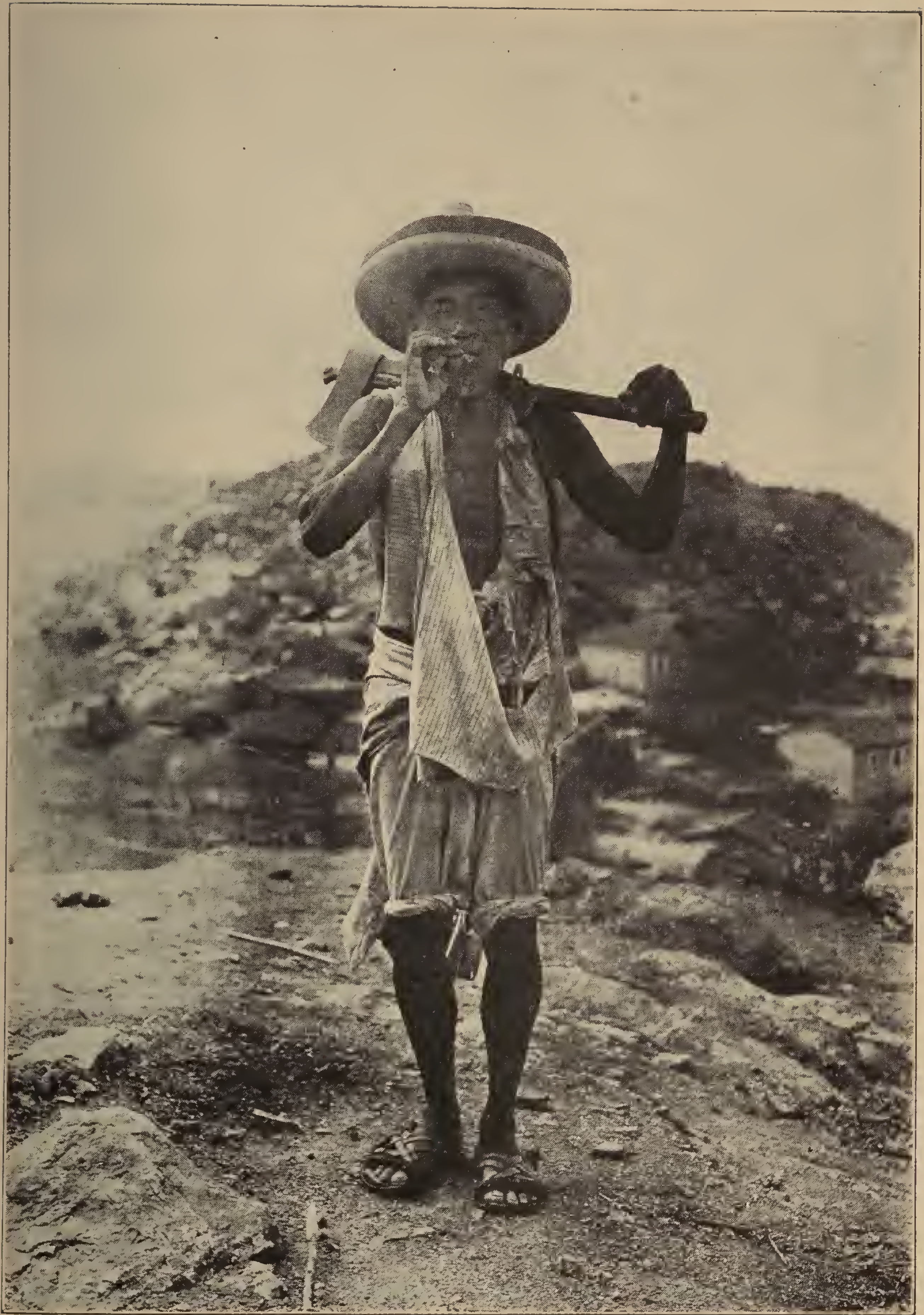
The products are as varied as the climates. In the low coast lands American companies have set out banana plantations not far from the Mexican Gulf. A little higher up coffee flourishes and in some sections rubber can be profitably raised.

The high plateau grows all the crops of the temperate zone. Its irrigated regions produce large quantities of cotton, a fibre that was used by the Aztecs when Cortes first came. It yields Indian corn, the staple food of the people, and indeed, some claim that Mexico is the original home of this plant. I have seen soil that produces two crops of wheat in winter months. Little fertilizer is used, and the sun, the air, and the earth furnish the plant food. As to fruits, Mexico has all those of the tropics and the temperate zone, freshly ripened every month. I have eaten ripe strawberries in Mexico City at Christmas, and at Irapuato, some two hundred miles northwest of the capital they are brought to the trains for sale the year round. Sugar cane is grown in the south, and tobacco is a favourite crop with the natives. In Yucatan and Campeche is raised henequen, or sisal hemp.

The very mention of the Mexican mines gives one visions of inexhaustible riches. They have been producing millions ever since Cortes robbed the treasures of the Montezumas, and they are still turning out nearly eighty million dollars' worth of gold, silver, copper, and lead every twelve months. Mexico has also mountains of iron, and her subterranean lakes of petroleum are among the wonders of our modern oil world. Few of us realize that we import oil from Mexico; that our wheat harvest is largely dependent on the binder twine made from its henequen; and that all the lead and zinc and three fourths of the silver we bring in from foreign lands come from this our sister republic.

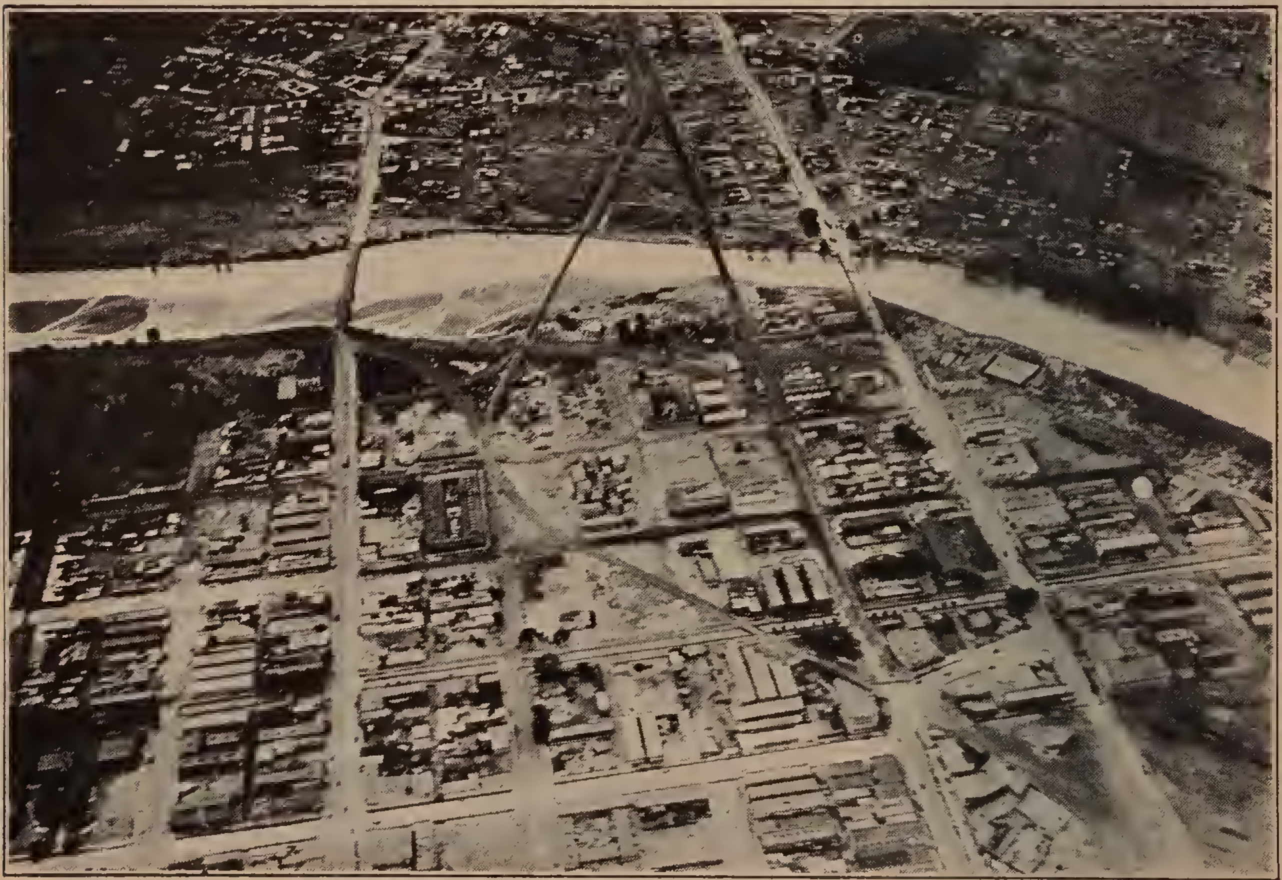
The Mexico of to-day is far more advanced than many suppose. Nearly all sections of the country are now accessible by railroad, and its trunk lines, if stretched end to end, would reach more than halfway around the globe. More than sixteen thousand miles are in operation, and extensions are planned or in process of construction.

The water powers of the country are being harnessed, and the steel posts of high-power transmission lines may be seen from the railway for miles up and down the plateau. Among others the falls of Juanacatlan, the Niagara of Mexico, are generating electricity, and Boquillas dam in the state of Chihuahua has the largest storage reservoir on the North American continent. That body of water is one hundred and fifty-five miles in circumference. It is used primarily to create light and power for the cities and mines but it also irrigates thousands of acres formerly arid, changing them from a Sahara into a Garden of Eden.



The peons are poorer than poverty itself, yet seem not to realize how badly off they are. Millions of them have nothing beyond a hat, a few rags, and the frayed pieces of sole leather tied to their feet.

The great stretches of wild, rough country along the Rio Grande make it comparatively easy for Mexican cattle thieves to run stolen herds across the river and sell them in the States.



At El Paso four bridges cross the Rio Grande to Juarez and tie the United States to Mexico. Over one of them street cars pass back and forth like shuttles between the two countries.

CHAPTER II

ON THE BORDER

> Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus——

THIS quotation from "Julius Cæsar" is recalled by a peculiar experience I had to-day. I did not bestride the world, but I was astraddle of the two greatest republics of the North American continent. I stood in the centre of the old wagon bridge that crosses the Rio Grande at Laredo, with my left foot in the United States while my right foot was in Mexico. I know this was the fact, for behind me was a post set on the line between the two countries. It is a steel shaft, about a foot square at the bottom and six feet in height. It is plated with silver, and each side of it bears an inscription showing that it marks the international boundary. The inscription on the side facing our country is in English and that on the opposite side in Spanish, but both mean the same. The English text reads:

> Boundary of the United States. Treaty of 1848. Re-established by treaties of 1884–1889.

Under these words is the following warning:

> Destruction or displacement of this monument is a misdemeanor, punishable by the United States or by Mexico.

The United States side of the shaft bears the American eagle and the other the coat of arms of the Mexican Republic. As I stood there with my back to the monument and my left foot in Mexico, I noticed that leg perceptibly trembling. It may have been for fear of another Mexican revolution before I could get both feet back into Uncle Sam's domain.

As I looked to the west, my eye followed the course of the Rio Grande on its sluggish way to the Gulf. It is a dreary river, with ragged, low banks, bordered by vegetation as coarse and thirsty as that of the Jordan. The stream is not navigable, and its chief business seems to be to define the winding line between the two countries and to give a dangerous task to our state and federal officials and even, sometimes, to thousands of soldiers in the United States.

From here to the Gulf of Mexico, its course on the map looks like the teeth of a saw, and coming down from El Paso to Laredo, it curves in and out and makes great bends covering almost double the distance of an air line. West of El Paso the river is entirely in the United States, and from there to the Pacific our boundary is otherwise marked. The whole length of the border, with its many curves, is, roughly speaking, as long as from New York to Salt Lake City, or more than two thousand miles.

Contrary to what is commonly supposed, and even to the maps in ordinary use, the Rio Grande does not in all places separate Texas and Mexico. The river has a way of suddenly changing its course in the flood season, cutting off great slices of land and adopting new curves. The result is that the actual border line is sometimes to the south of the river and sometimes to the north. Among the score or more of government commissions in Washington is one that deals exclusively with these quick shifts of the stream and their effects. Were it not for this commission and its constant surveys a ranch owner along the river might find his farm gone overnight from the United States into Mexico. The next year, perhaps, it might be back in Uncle Sam's land. As it nears its mouth, the river grows more and more snakelike. It is but one hundred miles as the crow flies from Mission, in Texas, to the blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico, but by the meandering course of the river it is more than five times as far. A point twelve miles downstream from the international ferry at Brownsville is but two miles from the ferry in a bee-line.

When the water is low, the Rio Grande can be forded almost anywhere, and in places its banks are cut up into gullies and covered with brush, making excellent hiding places for the many kinds of evildoers infesting the border. Indeed, but few people realize how big is the job of guarding this imaginary line that separates our rich republic from turbulent Mexico. The United States customs service must collect the tariff on dutiable goods, its immigration authorities are supposed to examine all persons crossing the line, its doctors try to keep out both people and animals having contagious diseases, its agricultural experts are on watch for infected plants, while the prohibition forces do their best to put a stop to the bootleggers' trade. Besides these problems of policing the border there are the cattle thieves who rustle American herds across into Mexico, and the perennial revolutionist seeking to get guns and ammunition from the States into the hands of his fellow conspirators.

In times of actual disturbance in Mexico our army takes charge and patrols the border. In peace time, however, the troops stay in their barracks and posts, of which there are a dozen or so, extending from Brownsville, in Texas, to Nogales, in Arizona. In order to be prepared for any contingency the War Department keeps about one fourth of all the troops stationed in continental United States, and nearly all of our cavalry, in this territory along the Mexican border.

The two chief stations for troops are San Antonio and El Paso, where supplies to outfit an invading force of a hundred thousand men are constantly kept. The two cities also have army aviation schools. There are aviators who fly back and forth along the boundary.

Since prohibition has bred its horde of bootleggers, the customs officers along the Mexican border have had to be on guard day and night. The dry laws were hardly enacted before liquor began to cross the line like the Rio Grande in flood, and the success of the smuggler encouraged those who were trying to bring in goods without paying duties. The supply of revenue officers is inadequate. On the entire border there are not twenty ports of entry, and the average distance between them is about one hundred miles. The El Paso district has six hundred and fifty miles of border with about twenty inspectors stationed at twelve different points.

The duties of the inspectors are difficult and dangerous. When they are after the smugglers they often serve as targets for pot shots from over the line, and several have been killed by the rum-runners. American rifles are frequently traded for liquors, and the Mexicans use the guns in case they are in danger from the revenue men.

The inspectors are mostly "mounted," which means that they go up and down the border in light motor cars. They usually ride in pairs, armed with revolvers and rifles, and even shoulder machine guns in order to protect themselves in case of attack. Airplanes are sometimes used and the rum pirates detected, as it were, from the skies. Because of the risk attached to their jobs, the customs inspectors are either unable to get insurance policies or else compelled to pay extra high rates.

Even more profitable than bringing liquor over the boundary is the smuggling in of narcotics to be sold at high prices to drug addicts in the States. A few boxes of powders and pills, as many, perhaps, as can be easily carried in a hand-satchel or under the seat of an automobile, may have a value of thousands of dollars on this side of the line.

When one considers the character of the country, indeed, it is surprising that conditions are not worse than I find them. In some places a gang of smugglers might pass within a few hundred yards of the revenue officers without the latter suspecting that any one was near. Nevertheless, these men know to an amazing degree what is going on in their districts. The presence of strangers in the thinly settled area is promptly noted and cash rewards often tempt the lawbreaker to become an informer.

While most of the two-thousand-mile border goes through waste land, some of it runs through cities and towns. This is so with El Paso and Juarez, and Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, the river alone dividing the cities. At such points the traffic on the international bridges is heavy, and it is not humanly possible to examine every passenger and vehicle. At Nogales, stores on the north side of International Street are in Arizona, and those on the south side are in Mexico. Tia Juana, just over the line from California, is a "wide open" town, exclusively devoted to racing, gambling, and drinking. During the annual racing season of one hundred days, Californians by the thousands cross into Mexico. Many come in their automobiles and their cars are strung out for half a mile on each side of the boundary, awaiting registration by the border officials.

The immigration authorities have almost as much trouble with lawbreakers as have the customs men. In this case it is people, not packages, that must be kept out. Chinese and Hindoos, who by our exclusion laws are denied admission to the United States, are constantly trying to slip in over the Mexican border. Sometimes they pay five hundred or even one thousand dollars apiece to men who undertake to pass them by the inspectors, and they employ all kinds of tricks and devices. One inspector, growing suspicious about a man and a woman in an automobile, pried up the lid of a box in the rear and found three frightened Chinese curled up inside.

Right here at Laredo I met a party of Hindoos awaiting a chance to slip in. They were on the southern side of the bridge, in the plaza that forms the centre of the Mexican town of Nuevo Laredo. They were tall, dark-faced, strong, husky East Indians, and the chief was a turbaned Hindoo from the Punjab.

I asked him where they were going, and was told that he had brought the gang of forty-three with him from Panama. They had landed in Guatemala by steamer from Panama, and come by the Pan American Railway from there into Mexico. I photographed four of these Hindoos. They were fine-looking fellows, all wearing turbans and

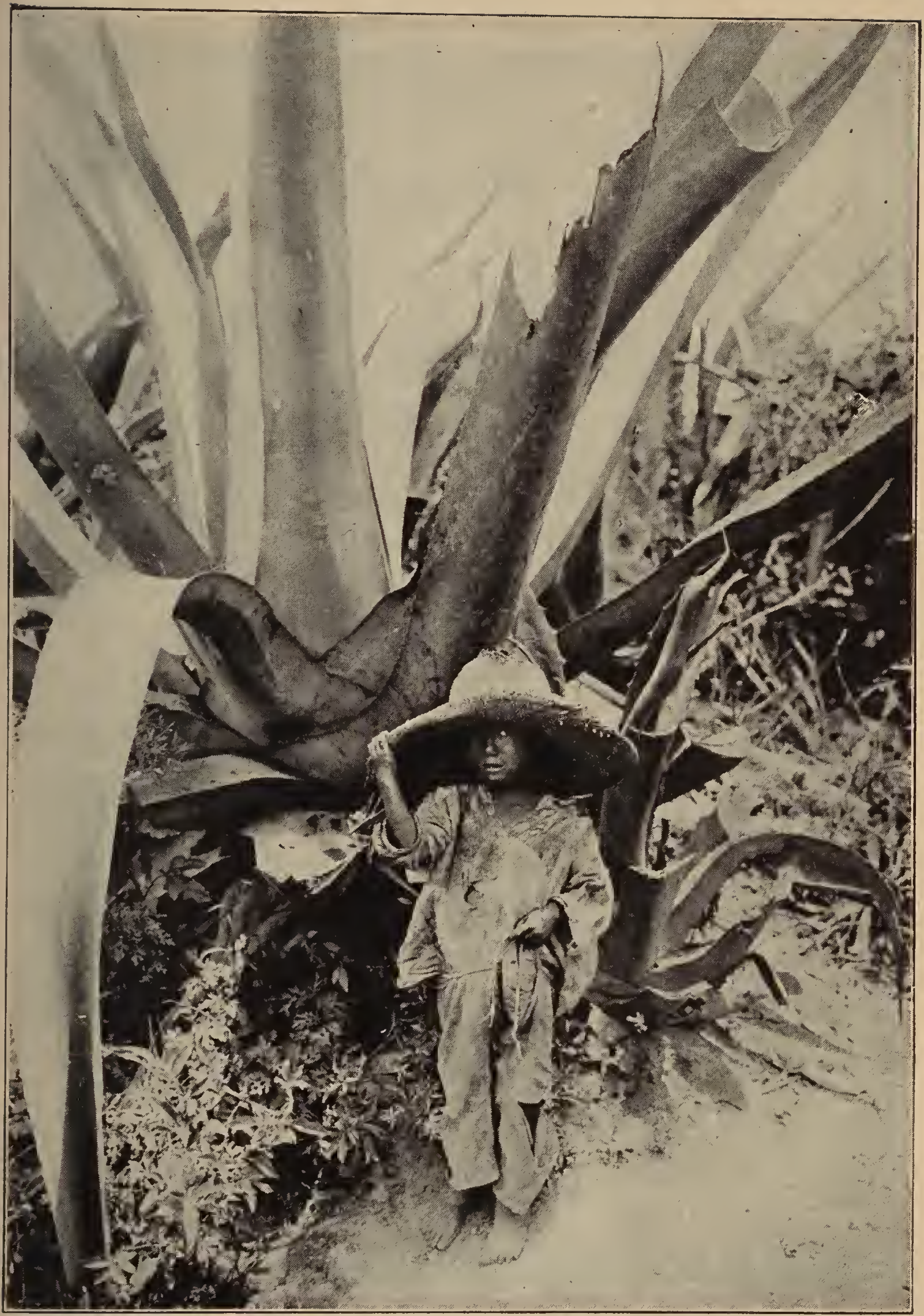
Indian dress, and it seemed to me as though they might have been lifted up bodily out of the streets of Delhi and dropped down into this Mexican town.

I am surprised at the number of Mexicans I find on the United States side of the boundary. The trains are packed with peons, coming into Texas to work on the farms. I am told something like forty thousand enter the United States every year to aid in picking cotton and harvesting grain. They go here and there through the border states, and as their wages are high, many a man returns home with enough money to keep him and his family for the rest of the year. The Texans employ Mexicans by the hundreds on the larger ranches, and there are many Mexican servants in all the towns of south Texas.

It cost me just a nickel to get into the Mexican Republic and another to return to the United States. This was the toll over the wagon bridge that crosses the Rio Grande into Nuevo Laredo. I was stopped on the Mexican side by three officials and asked if I had any guns or ammunition, and coming back one of our customs officers asked me if I had any liquor or dutiable goods on my person.

The difference in the prosperity of the two republics was apparent as soon as I put my feet on Mexican soil. The first man I met on leaving the bridge was a blind beggar who asked me for alms, and I saw more poor people as I came up into the town and went through the narrow, unpaved streets. Laredo, Texas, is a city of the rich. Its people have money to burn, and they are raising gold dollars on the lands lying all around them. The people of Nuevo Laredo seem to be just the reverse, although they are surrounded by a country equally good.

The town has gone to seed, and its houses of brick, covered with stucco and painted all the colours of the rainbow, are battered and worn. The only sign of active life is in the plaza, where a gaily uniformed band plays excellent music. I saw soldiers here and there, and now and then passed one of the federal infantry patrolling the streets.



From the thirty-three different species of cactus that thrive on the Mexican plateau the natives obtain vinegar, molasses, twine, thatch, distilled liquors, and pulque, the native beer.

Saddle Mountain looks down on the flat roofs of Monterey, which is only six hours by train from the United States boundary, yet seems to belong to an older world than ours.

In many places one must send his clothes to be pounded on the rocks by the native washerwoman. Time means little to her, and the week's wash may be a month in returning.

CHAPTER III

MONTEREY AND BUENA VISTA

TO-DAY I am in Monterey, two hundred and sixty-seven miles south of Laredo on the international boundary. Monterey is the metropolis of northern Mexico and the principal manufacturing city of the whole Republic. It lies in a rich mineral country. The mountains about it yield silver and gold and its railway facilities make it an easy matter to get in coal from the neighbouring state of Coahuila.

Monterey is the Pittsburgh of Mexico. It has the biggest steel plant south of the United States boundary, huge smelters, controlled by the Guggenheims, and a great brewery which looks as though our prohibition amendment might have shifted it bodily from Milwaukee to the Mexican plateau. I have called Monterey the Pittsburgh of Mexico. It is sometimes called the Chicago as well, for it is a great distributing point of supplies for mining and manufacturing enterprises in northeastern Mexico.

The city is situated six hours by train from the United States boundary, in a beautiful valley as high above the sea as the top of the Blue Ridge. This valley is surrounded by mountains as ragged as those of the Rockies. They shine in opalescent hues under the rays of the semi-tropical sun. One of the peaks looks like the hump of a gigantic camel and another has a head like a bishop's mitre. The Sierra Madre, or Mother Range, in this clear air, seems to be a great etching traced by the hands of the gods.

The slopes of the mountains are thirsty and dry, but the fields of the valley are green, irrigated by the Santa Catarina River, which runs through it. Irrigation, however, cannot alter the nature of the soil which is sandy and easily picked up by the wind. Dust-clouds, the great pest of this part of Mexico, sometimes sweep over the city. The river brings floods which at times carry away buildings and drown hundreds of people. Some years ago it swept away hundreds of homes and killed more than five hundred people. But this same stream, which has taken life in the past, is giving light and power for the enterprises of to-day.

The houses of Monterey are typically Mexican. They are of one and two stories, built around courts, or patios, in which are all sorts of vegetation. A little American boy here writing back home thus described them:

"In the United States we put a yard around the house. Here in Monterey the people build the house around the yard."

This gives a fair idea of the architecture. Every building incloses a courtyard, which, viewed from above, shows banana plants, bushes, and other vegetation growing, as it were, right out of the houses. The roofs are all flat, and Monterey is more like a city of the Orient than of the North American continent. At first sight it would seem that it might have come from the Spain of a hundred years ago, but as we look more closely we see big business buildings and a million-dollar hotel of reinforced concrete not far from the principal plaza, while farther out are villas of American style.

The streets are narrow and cross each other at right angles, with plazas and parks here and there. The town is paved with brick, and has a factory turning out tens of millions of brick every year. In some sections American buildings made of brick are going up and the day of brick and concrete seems to be crowding out that of adobe and stucco.

Street cars fly back and forth. They remind me of the Canadian firm which had the fat contract for making the modern improvements in Monterey. This company obtained the concession for putting in waterworks, sewers, electric lights, and the street railways, and in payment received bonds equal to the amount invested at ten per cent. interest for ninety-nine years. The concession was so worded that the more the contractors spent the better their bargain, and the work was done regardless of cost. The money was borrowed in England at low rates of interest, and remittance men and other second sons of the lenders were sent over and given good jobs, for all of which the Mexicans paid.

The same firm planned a big hotel at the Topo Chico Springs near here. There is a big business in the sale of mineral water from these springs, which are famed for their medicinal qualities.

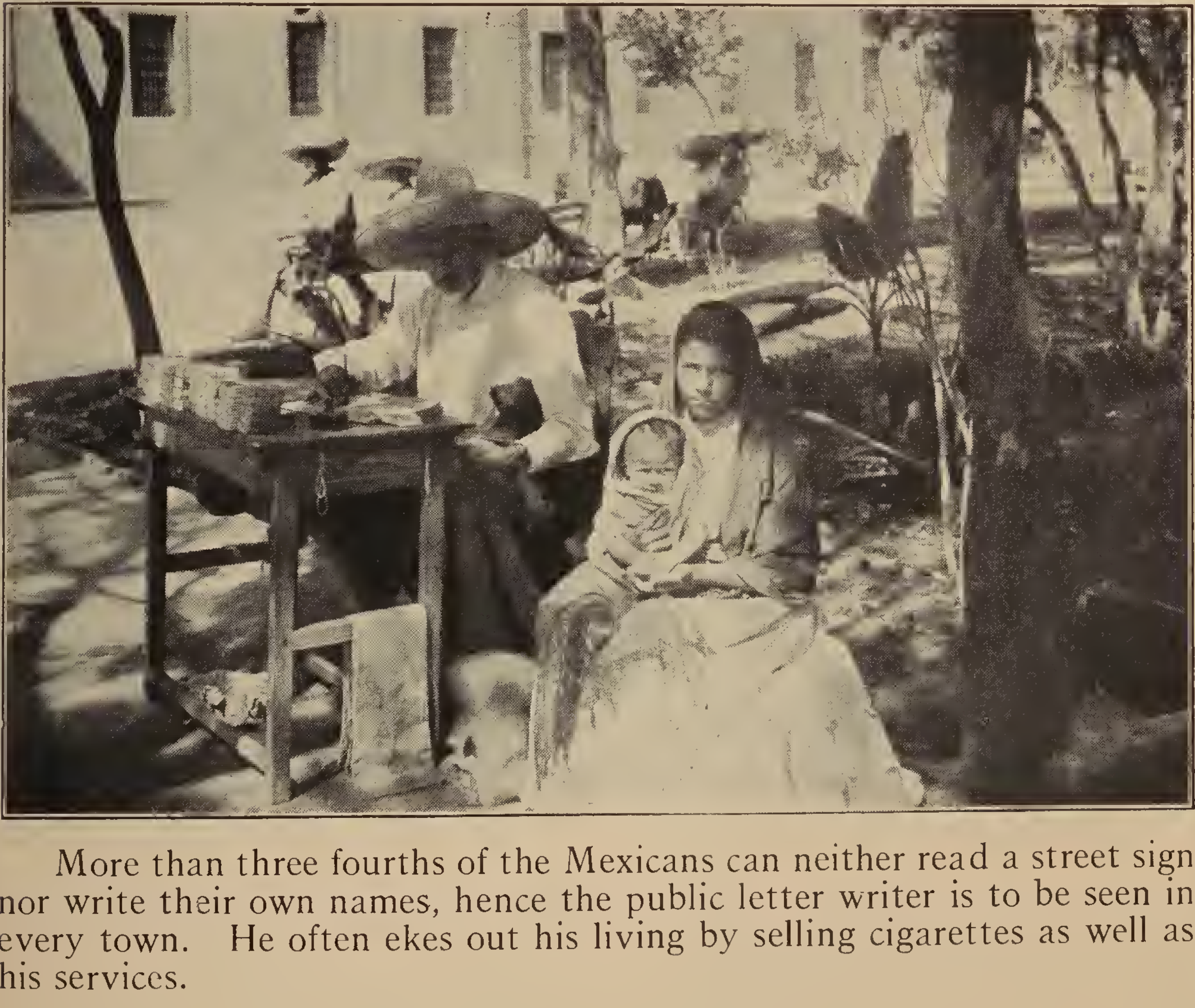
Next to Tampico, Monterey is perhaps the most American city in Mexico. The shops have signs in both Spanish and English, and at the American Store one can get American magazines, newspapers, clothing, and other things. The two best motion-picture houses specialize in American films. Our citizens here are interested in the stores, in plantations, and in other businesses. A number of them have bought lands along the railroad from Monterey to Tampico, the great oil port.

To-day ours is a peaceful penetration of Mexico. But it was far otherwise when "Old Rough and Ready" Zachary Taylor fought the Mexican troops on this very spot. My trip from Laredo to Monterey was made in a few hours in a comfortable Pullman. General Taylor and his army took several weeks to cover the same ground.

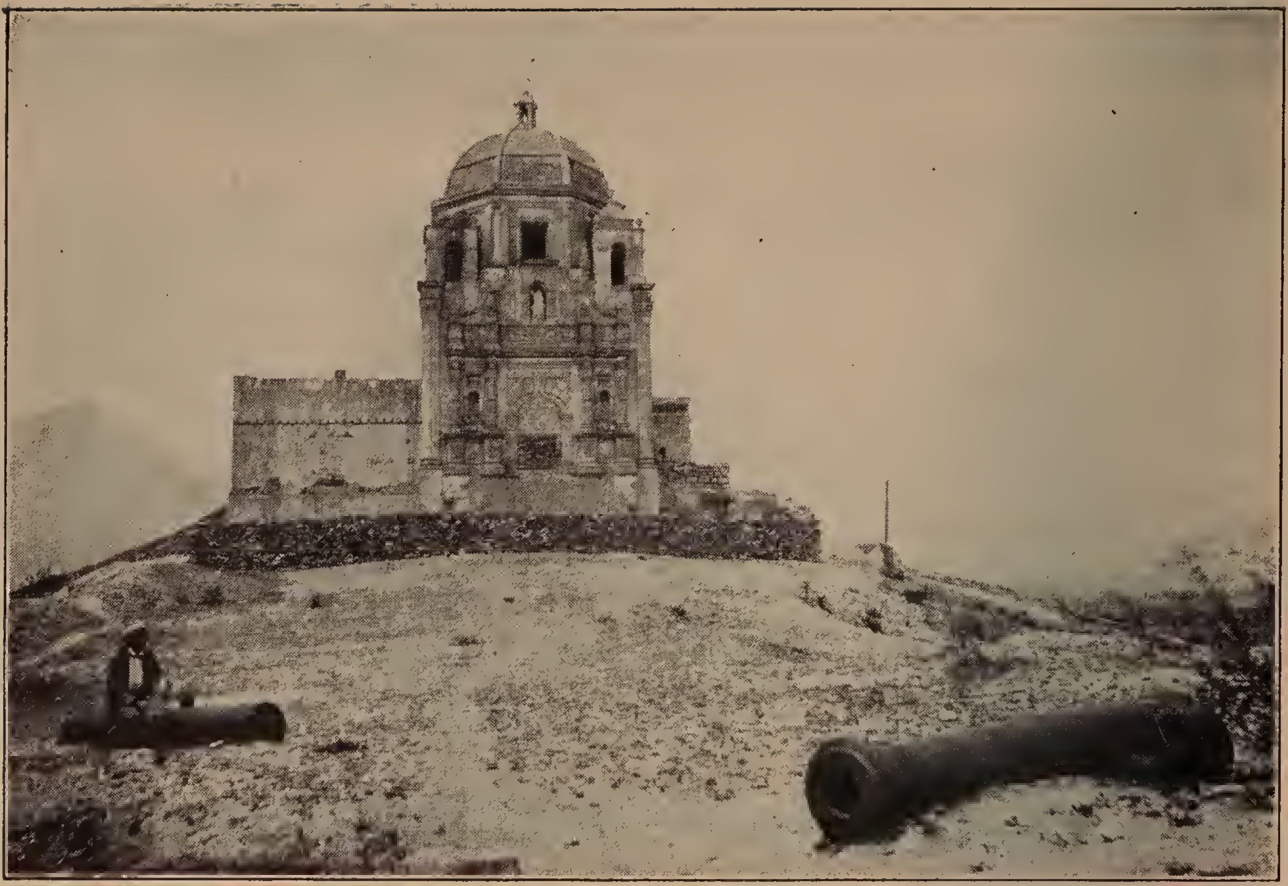
Taylor's journey was made on horseback with an army of sixty-seven hundred men, most of whom were on foot. There were then no railroads in Mexico and practically none in the United States. Most of the way was over the desert, and the country furnished but little food for the army. When the Americans got to Monterey they found it in the hands of ten thousand Mexican soldiers. The town had been fortified. The walls were lined with cannon, and the streets and houses were barricaded and planted with artillery. There were forts about the city, the strongest of which was the bishop's palace on a hill at the southwest.

I have visited the Grand Plaza and other places which the Mexicans had fortified, and have gone to the outskirts and picked out the spots where the defence works were located. The old palace, or church, where the chief engagement took place, still stands on the edge of the city, and there is a wall of stones about it to-day. I found some of the old American cannon lying on the slope of the hill; they have not been moved from their places since the day of the battle. In his siege of the town General Taylor captured the other forts first. When he had taken this one he commanded all the heights about the city and

An American boy wrote home from Monterey: "In the United States we put a yard around the house; here they build the house around the yard." The typical Mexican house encloses an open patio filled with shrubs and flowers.



More than three fourths of the Mexicans can neither read a street sign nor write their own names, hence the public letter writer is to be seen in every town. He often ekes out his living by selling cigarettes as well as his services.



Some of the fiercest fighting in our war with Mexico was for possession of the old Bishop's Palace, which commanded the town of Monterey. The cannon used in the engagement still lie on the slopes of the hillside.

Only some twenty-five millions of Mexico's half billion acres are now arable. But irrigation is creating new cultivable areas, particularly in southern Mexico, where soil once unproductive now yields fine crops of oranges, apples, and alfalfa.

began to shell it, while his men broke their way through the walls of the houses until they had almost reached the Grand Plaza. At that time the Mexicans, who had lost many men, came out with a flag of truce and surrendered.

It was at Buena Vista, seventy miles south of Monterey, that General Taylor's troops administered a crushing defeat to the Mexican general, Santa Anna, who had four times as many men. Indeed, the Mexican force was so large that Santa Anna thought it ridiculous for the Americans to fight. He demanded of General Taylor that he surrender. The reply sent back afterward became a campaign cry and aided in the election of Taylor as President. It was:

"General Taylor never surrenders."

Shortly after that the Mexicans sent in a party under a white flag to inquire what General Taylor was waiting for, and "Old Rough and Ready" answered: "General Taylor is waiting for General Santa Anna to surrender."

In that engagement twenty thousand Mexicans were beaten by less than five thousand Americans. Their losses were about twenty-five hundred killed and wounded and four thousand missing. We had only two hundred and sixty-four killed and four hundred and fifty wounded, but that was almost one sixth of our whole force. General Lew Wallace says that the Americans were beaten oftener during that engagement than there were hours in the day, but that they did not know they were beaten. They rallied and fought, and rallied and fought, and at last wrung victory from the hands of defeat.

I have visited the battlefield of Buena Vista. It is now desert-like and barren. The ground about it is covered with sagebrush and stones and the only green vegetation is the tree under which General Taylor's hospital stood during the engagement. At least, I suppose the hospital stood there, for the tree still bears the name of the General Taylor Hospital tree.

The battle of Buena Vista made General Taylor the hero of the American people. Upon his return to the United States he was received with great applause, and that notwithstanding his desire to keep in the background. A story illustrating his simplicity is told of a senator named Butler, whose brother, Pierce Butler, was killed at the battle of Buena Vista. Senator Butler had asked for a description of the battle and General Taylor replied: "Well, come and dine with me to-day and I will tell you all about it."

Throughout the dinner the senator waited with more or less impatience for the story to begin, and at its close brought up the subject of the battle, asking about his brother. General Taylor said:

"Yes, Senator, your brother Pierce was a good soldier and he died after a brave fight on the field. Now you want to know how the battle was fought, do you?"

"Yes, General, if you will be so kind. Please tell me just how your troops were placed and all about those of the enemy. I would like to understand how, with such a small force, you could defeat Santa Anna who had four times the number."

"The difference was more than that," said General Taylor, "but we did not stop to count. I know that I wished for more soldiers."

"Yes," said the senator, "but what was the order of battle?"

"Why, Senator, we began fighting early in the morning the first day and we fit all that day. We lost a good many men, and at night it looked pretty bad."

"Well, what next?"

"Well," said General Taylor, "when it got dark I rode over to Saltillo to look after our stores and provide against a surprise."

"Why did you go yourself? Why not send one of your aides?"

"You see, Senator, everything depended on our not having our supplies cut off, and I wanted to see for myself."

"How was it next morning?" asked the senator.

"About the same as the night before," said General Taylor, and stopped.

"Who was the first man you met?"

"General Wool."

"And what did he say?"

"He said, 'All is lost.'"

"What did you reply?"

"'Maybe so, General, we'll see.' And then we went to fighting again and fit all that day and toward night it looked better."

Here General Taylor stopped again, although the senator waited impatiently for more, and finally asked:

"What next?"

"Well, next morning it was reported to me that Santa Anna and all his men had disappeared in the night, and I can tell you that I was devilish glad to be rid of them so."

It was in these engagements that General Grant figured as a second lieutenant. Grant afterward declared that the Mexican War was unjust. Jefferson Davis was in command of a regiment of Mississippi volunteers at the battle of Monterey and there Robert E. Lee began his service in Mexico under General Wool. Lee was afterward transferred to the army of Vera Cruz, where he served so well that at the close of the war he left Mexico as a colonel.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORLD'S TREASURE VAULT

I HAVE come by way of Torreon from Monterey to Zacatecas, the famed City of Silver. Much of my journey was over barren uplands and cactus-studded wastes. We climbed steadily, and during the last nine miles the train fairly crawled as it made its way up the steep grades. Zacatecas is six thousand feet above Monterey and its altitude is a mile and a half above that of the Mexican Gulf.

I have called it the Silver City. The name is well warranted. Here everything is silver. The mines were worked in the days of Cortes and from then until now the digging has gone on, giving hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of precious metal to the world. It goes on still, and under my feet the Aztecs of to-day are delving away in the bowels of the earth as did their forefathers in the past. The city itself is a drab jumble of flat-roofed, box-shaped houses built close up to cobblestone sidewalks and packed into a narrow ravine or clinging to its sides. Underneath its steep streets and lanes tunnels wind in and out through veins of silver. Mountains, their sides shot with silver, are all around and about, and their tops rise to the silvery skies.

A large part of the population of Zacatecas is made up of peon miners, who go in and out of the holes in the ground at morning and night. Some of the mines are going twenty-four hours a day and the men work in shifts. In the deeper levels the native workers file past the timekeepers, checking their blankets as they go. Stepping into a great bucket attached to the end of a rope they are dropped down into the earth. In the more primitive workings the crude windlass may stick and they may be suspended in the pitch-dark shaft for an hour.

Here at Zacatecas the deeper workings are terrifically hot and the sweat runs off the miners in streams. They usually work naked except for the sandals on their feet, the narrow strip of cloth between the legs held in place by a string, and the rosary or good-luck charm around the neck. They wear immense yellow straw hats which protect them from the falling stones and serve as storage place for cigarettes and lunches of tortillas.

Ore stealing is common in Mexican mines, especially those yielding silver and gold. In spite of his scant clothing the peon is searched whenever he comes out of the ground, and sometimes by three sets of men. He often conceals bits of the highest-grade ore under his arms, between his toes, in his ears, and in every other imaginable place, and it is only by searching that the mine owners can prevent sizable losses.

The miners are devoted to their religion. They often put a cross or a bright-coloured picture of the Virgin in an empty dynamite box and set it up as an altar in one of the subterranean galleries. Sometimes they bring fresh flowers or candles to place on these altars, and they always take off their hats and cross themselves as they pass.

Though most of the Zacatecas mines use little railways and electric hoists to get out the ore, some are still worked by the methods of the past. The ore is sometimes slowly raised by the crudest windlasses worked by patient burros or peons and I have seen Indians with rawhide bags filled with ore, weighing from one to two hundred pounds, crawling up chicken-ladders of logs notched at intervals of eight inches. These men occasionally lose their balance and fall, but they are for the most part very surefooted. The wonder is that more of them are not killed every year.

As elsewhere in Mexico, water has flooded some of the deeper mines. Much of this water is pumped out by modern machinery, but some is still drawn up in great dripping sacks of horsehide and used for drinking and washing. Surface water is scarce, and one of the common sounds of Zacatecas is the cry of the water carriers as they go up and down.

Zacatecas, with its hundred mines and its annual output of six million dollars' worth of silver, is only one of the great mining districts of this country. In its mountains are vast hoards of precious metals. Cecil Rhodes, builder of Great Britain's empire in South Africa, once subscribed to the prediction that from Mexico's subterranean treasure houses will come the gold, the silver, the copper, and the precious stones that will build the empires of to-morrow.

When these words were spoken Mexico had been producing gold and silver for nearly four hundred years, but it was not until after the death of Rhodes that her mines were brought up to the enormous output of recent times. Since the discovery of America her total yield of the precious metals has been around five billion dollars. She has produced one third of all the silver now in use upon earth, and the output of gold and silver in a good year amounts to more than sixty-five million dollars. If you will take all the gold coins in this country, all of the silver dollars, all of the quarters, half dollars, and dimes, and all the bullion in the United States Treasury, and shovel them together into one pile, that pile would not equal the treasure that has come out of Mexico's mines.

To-day this land stands at the head of the silver-producing countries, and that notwithstanding the fact that much of the mining is by old and wasteful methods and that many localities containing mineral deposits have scarcely been touched. It is said that three fourths of the mineral possibilities are as yet unexploited. The mines have rapidly come into the hands of the Americans, however, and they are operating them after the most modern methods. Our holdings now constitute eighty per cent. of the producing mining properties in Mexico. The new stamp mills and smelters and the cyanide process have taken the place of the mule-crushers and patio methods and the percentage of gold and silver extracted from the ores is steadily increasing.

Almost every state in the Republic has rich mines, but the principal ones are in central and western Mexico. They run from our border as far down as Oaxaca, a distance as great as from New York to Oklahoma City, and go from there westward as far as from New York to Boston. The best mines are on the western slopes of the mountains at from half a mile to a mile and a half above sea-level. Nearly all of them yield silver, either alone or in combination with other metals.

There are more than five thousand silver mines in Mexico. Some have produced phenomenal riches. The total output of those about Zacatecas has been more than one billion dollars and those of Chihuahua have yielded between four and five hundred millions. The Pachuca district in the state of Hidalgo has valuable mineral properties.

In Guanajuato the Americans have renovated and extended the silver-mining industry, which has been in operation for more than two hundred years. They have sunk their shafts far below those of the former Mexican owners and have put up enormous mills capable of handling hundreds of thousands of tons of ore every year. They get their power from waterfalls one hundred and eighty miles distant and are mining with the most modern machinery.

A little farther north, in Chihuahua, the richest in minerals of all the states of the Republic, silver mines are still being worked which have been operated for more than three centuries. In that region are the Batopilas mine, which was modernized by Governor Shepherd, the first big American investor in Mexican silver properties; the Santa Eulalia mines, now controlled by the American Mining and Smelting Company, and the famous Parral mine. As early as 1612, Parral was sending a steady stream of silver into the royal coffers of Spain and to-day it continues to pour treasures into the hands of its American owners.

In San Luis Potosí the richest district is Catorce, which has silver and lead mixed with gold. In Durango there are deposits formed of a network of silver veins mixed with iron and other metals. In Oaxaca there are more than a dozen mineral zones, containing silver, gold, copper, and lead, and in Sonora, where both silver and copper are mined, there was found the biggest lump of silver on record. Its weight was 2750 pounds. It was discovered by a poor Indian, but through a dispute as to its ownership all of it went to the Spanish crown.

There are eighteen hundred gold mines in Mexico, though the present production is small. The bulk of the gold comes from silver veins which also carry more or less of the yellow metal. The country has never been as important in gold mining as in silver mining. The chief gold-producing district is about El Oro, in the state of Mexico, where French and English capital is invested. That region, which is one of the largest gold fields of America, has some valuable mines. The Dos Estrellas has paid as much as a million dollars a year on a capitalization of three hundred thousand dollars, while the Peñoles once yielded nearly four million dollars on a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollar capital. One of the mines has a vein of gold which, in places, is thirty feet wide. There are also gold-bearing properties in Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Oaxaca, and Lower California. In the last-mentioned state are a few placer mines, some of which have done well.

Most of Montezuma's gold must have come from placers. Among his presents to Cortes were a Spanish helmet of pure gold and two circular plates of gold as large as cart wheels. The gold taken from him and sent to Spain is estimated to have been worth at least seven million dollars.

In the future, the baser metals are likely to surpass in value the gold product of Mexico. Already the copper mined in a year is often worth more than the gold. Among the best known of the copper mines are the Green Cananea, the Moctezuma, and the Boleo. The Green Cananea properties are not far from the Arizona border. They have produced forty-one million pounds of copper in a single year. The amount of this ore in sight in western Mexico is beyond conception, and the country is sure to be one of the greatest of the copper producers for generations to come.

Deposits of iron found in Oaxaca and Vera Cruz are said to amount to many millions of tons. The most famous iron mass of the country, however, is the great iron mountain, which rises almost out of the city of Durango. It is a mighty hill of solid ore nearly a mile long, almost a quarter of a mile wide, and six hundred and forty feet high. This enormous deposit runs nearly seventy per cent. pure. It is said the amount of iron in it could supply all the steel mills of Pittsburgh for hundreds of years.

Humboldt thought the Durango mine might be the world's greatest meteorite, and he rode more than one thousand miles on a mule to study it. But geologists of to-day believe that the metallic hill is the result of an earthquake which broke a fissure in the earth through which molten matter was forced up and hardened. Some of this ore now goes to the big steel plant at Monterey, where I saw it smelted and cast into ingots for making steel rails.

To-day Mexico's greatest single source of wealth is her oil, of which I shall speak further on.

Besides her wealth of metals and oil, the country has a goodly quantity of pearls and precious or semi-precious stones. The pearls come from the shore of Lower California. The oysters are gathered by native divers on both sides of the peninsula and are also cultivated on under-sea farms. The pearl fishing is carried on under concessions from the Mexican government. The oysters are planted where the young can be protected from their natural enemies. As they grow they are taken into deeper water and put into large boxes or cages and there left to develop. The crop is ready at the end of two years, at which time the shells contain the best pearls. I am also told that the pearls disappear after that age.

Three kinds of pearls, yellow, white, and black, are now being found. The yellow ones are of the least value, the white come next, being worth about twenty-five dollars a carat, and then come the black pearls, which are worth eight hundred dollars a carat and upward.

One of the biggest pearls ever found here was three fourths of an inch in diameter. It was taken to Paris and sold to the Emperor of Austria for ten thousand dollars. A black pearl from this region valued at twenty-five thousand dollars went to Madrid and was given by Spain to Napoleon III. Another famous Mexican pearl, found about two hundred years ago, was of a rose colour. It was sold in Europe for fifty thousand dollars.

Mexico has mines of fine stones, including opals, emeralds, topazes, garnets, and amethysts. The most profitable are those which produce the turquoise and the opal. The turquoises come mainly from Zacatecas, and the opals from near Querétaro where I have seen hundreds of peons at work in the mines. The opal veins lie in strata scattered through a matrix so hard that dynamite is used to dislodge them.

Like their Spanish predecessors the American owners of Mexican mines have on their hands a big labour problem. The people have always resented the outsiders coming into the country and making big fortunes out of

Mexico's natural resources and native labour, and ever since Diaz, the popular leaders have raised the cry that the country was being given over to foreigners. This is so, although the inflow of foreign capital has had the effect of increasing wages and improving conditions. The people are better off and wages are higher in the districts nearest the United States border. Nevertheless, one of our consuls has estimated that Mexican wages still average only about thirty per cent. of those paid in the States for the same kind of labour. In the past thousands of the Indians never received any real wages, and even after slavery was wiped out they were long held to their work by a peonage system.

Under Diaz the mining and other big companies were free to do about as they pleased, but following the revolutions led by Madero and Carranza, the power of the government began to be used in behalf of the workers. The constitution of 1917 contains labour provisions far more advanced than the laws of any of our states, and its adoption has brought protests from the foreign property owners, who insist that the constitution will make it impossible for them to continue operations and will bar all further investment in Mexico. Mexicans themselves admit that many of the provisions are impracticable and not enforceable under present conditions.

Suppose you were in charge of a mine or ranch somewhere in Mexico. According to the constitution, your employees could not work more than six days a week, and eight hours a day, or seven hours at night. You would be obliged to pay wages in cash, not in goods, or orders for merchandise, and to pay double rates for all overtime. If your property were not near a city or village you would be required to provide suitable dwellings to be rented to your employees at a monthly rate of not more than one per cent. of their value; to build and equip schoolhouses, and to instal sanitary improvements. You would be held liable for all injuries to your men while at work, and your labour contracts could be legalized only by the Mexican authorities. The wages would have to be approved by a district labour board, created by law, and the same board could force you to take back any employee it considered unjustly discharged or pay him three months' wages.

The constitution guarantees the workers the right to strike, but forbids employers to lock out their men. If a board of arbitration decides that a strike was justified, it may order the employer to pay all or part of the wages lost by the men while out on the strike. If you should fail to obey the orders of the board, the government may step in and take over your business, as actually happened in one cotton mill before the owners could be forced to take back some men they had discharged. Moreover, according to the constitution, your employees would have the right to share in the profits made under your management.

Americans experienced in dealing with labour say these constitutional provisions are far beyond the needs or the wishes of the average peon, and that most of the workers are not interested in them. The foreign-owned properties, as a whole, pay higher wages and take better care of their labour than Mexican employers. On the other hand, they have much difficulty in keeping the men on the job. The Indian can scarcely be induced to work a full week at a time, and he takes a day or two off on the slightest excuse. Some companies have to carry on their payrolls from twenty-five to fifty per cent. more men than are at work at any one time, and they generally pay a bonus to the man who puts in a full month.

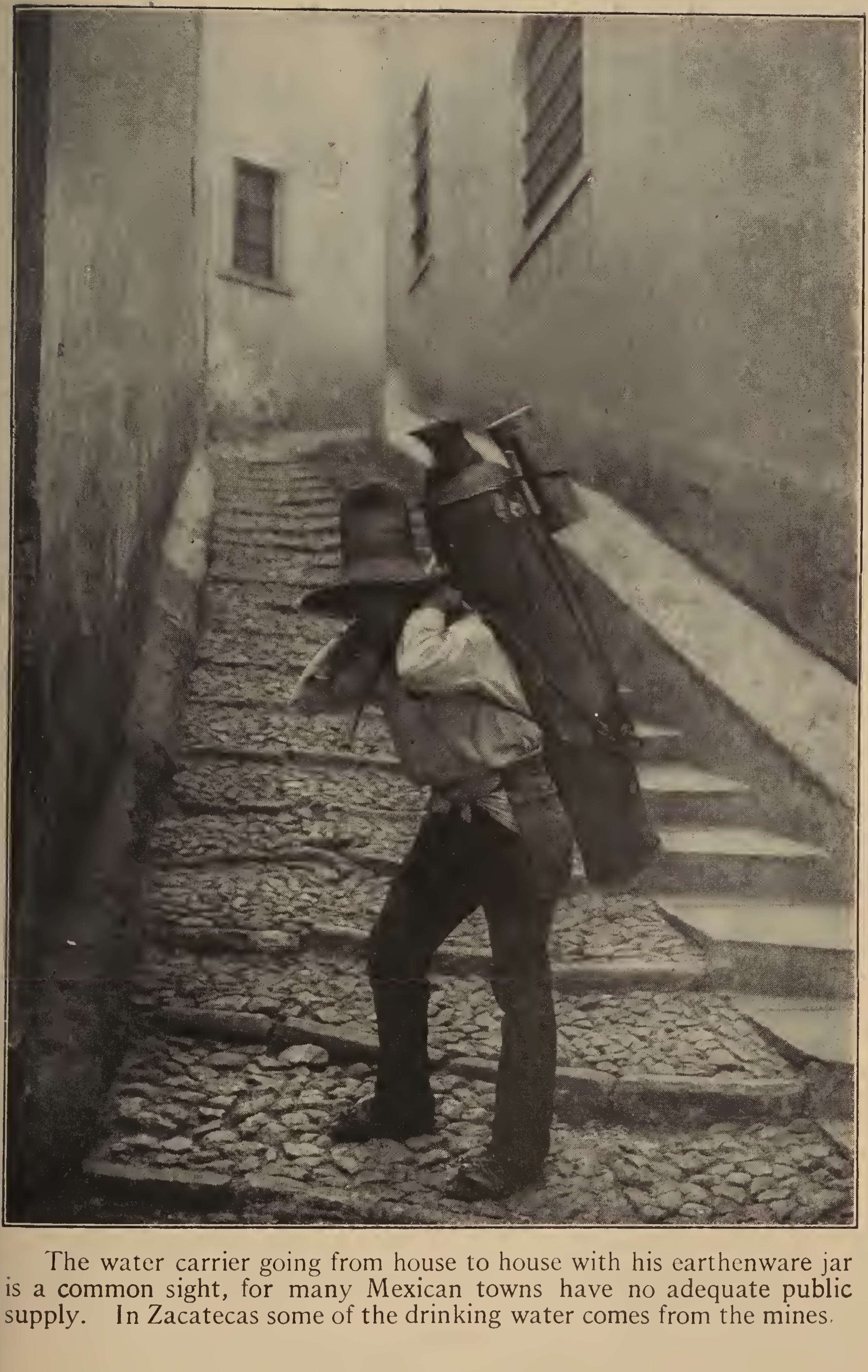
Under the stimulus of the revolution and the new constitution, many Mexican workers have been organized into unions associated with the big labour bodies of the United States. In Mexico City and also in Vera Cruz these unions have declared for radical programmes, and in Yucatan the workers have put into power a socialist governor. Nevertheless, it is the belief of those best informed that changes in the real status of labour will come about gradually and that the present restrictions will be so modified that foreigners can continue to make profitable investments in our sister republic.

CHAPTER V

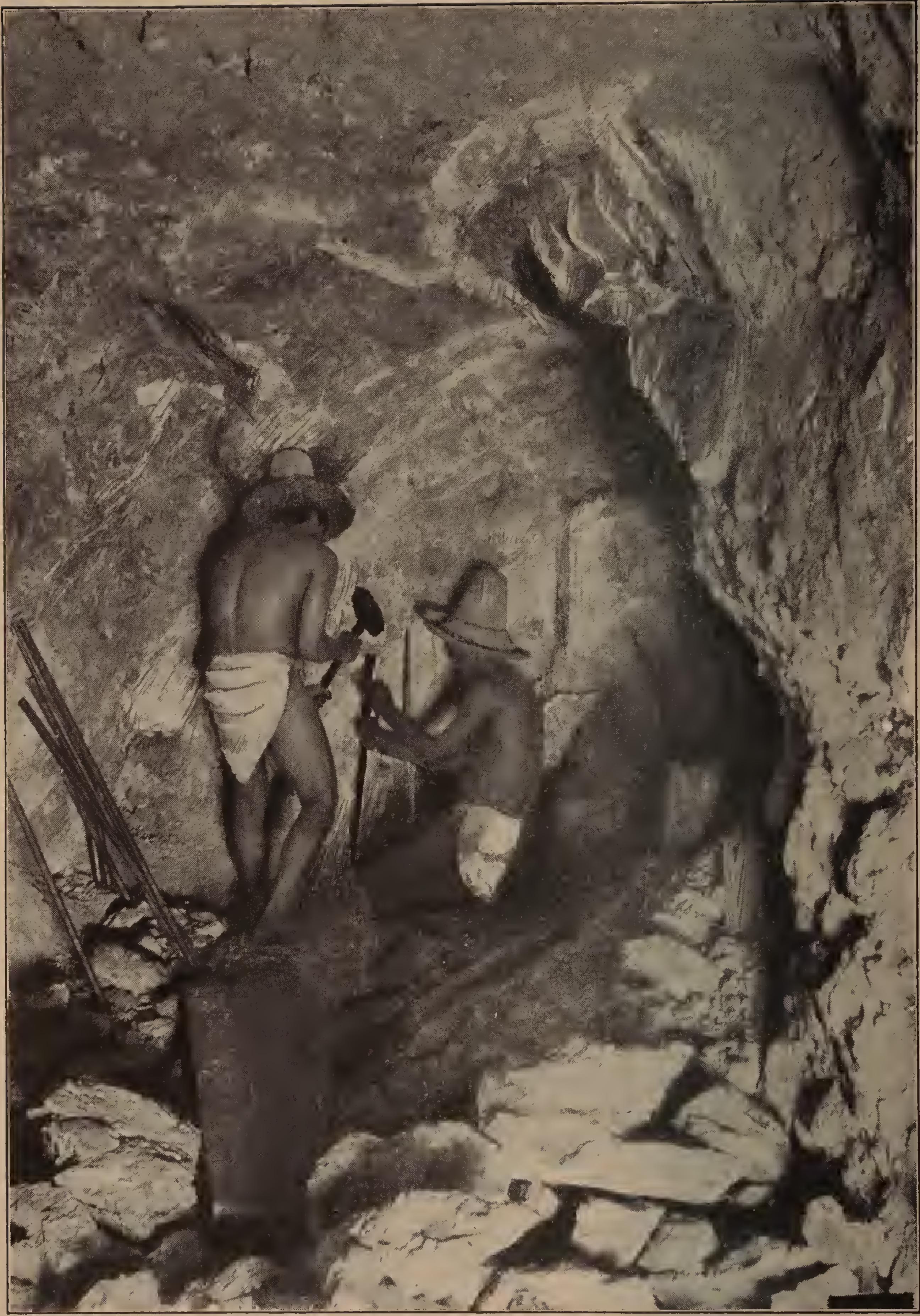
LOST MINES AND BONANZAS

EVER since I came to Mexico my eyes have been bulging at the tales I hear of rich mines, all traces of which have disappeared. The stories come from old prospectors, from mining engineers, and from men well acquainted with Mexico's mineral resources. At the College of Mines, in Mexico City, I have seen gold and silver from workings that once turned out millions, but are now filled with water; and in the government records are notes of vast properties long since abandoned. More than a century ago, when Alexander Humboldt, the great scientist, travelled over this country, he counted three thousand mines, fully two thousand of which are now unknown except by tradition.

Many of the mines of the Aztecs can still be identified. After Cortes had conquered Montezuma he got the Aztec emperor to send his tax-gatherers out over the country to record the location of the best properties. They brought back an itemized list, but it is doubtful whether it was a true one. Cortes was even less successful in his attempts to find where the Aztecs had buried their treasures. He tried to get this information out of Guatemoc, the nephew and son-in-law of Montezuma, whom he tortured by fire to make him tell what he knew. The Prince at first claimed there was no treasure, but finally said that the gold had been thrown into the waters. Cortes then searched the



The water carrier going from house to house with his earthenware jar is a common sight, for many Mexican towns have no adequate public supply. In Zacatecas some of the drinking water comes from the mines.



In the terrific heat of the deep mines, the peon discards everything except his hat, which serves as protection from falling stones as well as a storage place for cigarettes and lunch. He usually wears, too, a rosary and perhaps a cross around his neck.

lakes about Mexico City, but his divers found nothing, although they dug up in the garden of Guatemoc a disc of pure gold as big as a cart wheel.

The treasures of Montezuma remain to this day undiscovered. They are estimated to have been worth eighty million dollars and there are documents, in picture language, itemizing the shields, helmets, sandals, and plates of solid gold, and the measures of gold grains and dust that made up the great hoard. One tradition locates the hiding place at Coyoacan, not far from Mexico City, but it has yet to be verified by recovery of the lost treasure.

There is no question as to the vast wealth of the Aztec emperor. Montezuma's predecessor was a miser who, Cortes says, had collected a treasure richer than that of any monarch of Europe. Much of this consisted of grains and nuggets of gold and gold utensils and trinkets. Cortes had a great part of it melted and cast into ingots. He sent one fifth of the product to Spain, including a gold cannon, which the Aztecs cast for him, and a platter of gold so big that a two-hundred-pound hog could have been served upon it. He describes how gold dust enclosed in birds' quills was sold as an article of merchandise at Montezuma's capital, and expatiates upon the great beauty of the gold vessels carved by the Indians.

When Mexico got its independence from Spain, it entered upon an era of revolution that lasted for years. During that time some of the most profitable mines were abandoned. The water rushed in, their works were destroyed and their very existence was blotted from the knowledge of man. There are many mine dumps and the remains of old workings scattered here and there throughout the country. Some of these dumps are said to contain fortunes and are being re-worked. It used to be that a mine had to produce at least thirty dollars to the ton to be worth operating, so that only the rich ore was taken and the poor thrown aside. We now have in the United States mines which pay well on values of less than five dollars per ton, and the cyanide process and modern smelting are bringing tens of millions of dollars' worth of gold and silver out of rocks in Mexico once regarded as waste.

Although the Spaniards in colonial days sometimes made fortunes from silver, they only skimmed the cream of the mines and were forced to divide the proceeds. The Church insisted on having a tenth, and the King of Spain not only had a monopoly on the gunpowder and quicksilver necessary for mining but also took for himself a fifth of the gross output. The King's share was afterward cut down to a tenth, but there were assay fees and coinage dues which brought the taxes on mining up to at least sixteen per cent. of the value of the metal obtained. Gold and silver bullion was not legal tender until it had been coined at the mint in Mexico City. In remote districts unstamped silver was sometimes used for money, but it was worth only half the same weight in minted coin.

The mines of those days were worked with what was practically slave labour. The Spaniards had no machinery and everything was done either by men or by mules. The supply of labourers was never enough to satisfy the demand, for the Indians hated to toil in the mines for their conquerors. The working conditions were indescribably bad. In one mine, near Pachuca, a gang of two hundred were forced to work chained together and never allowed to come above ground from one day to another. In their desperation these Indians set fire to the timbers in the tunnels and shafts, causing the mine to cave in and bury them alive.

Ore was brought out in rawhide bags suspended on the backs of the miners by straps around their foreheads. Sometimes there were as many as eighteen hundred steps to be climbed on the ladders leading out of the mines. The powder men who blasted the ore seldom lived beyond the age of thirty-five. The women and the children who worked above ground, breaking up the ore or mixing it with acids and mercury, were often blinded and poisoned by the rock dust and chemicals. Later mule-power, and then machinery, took the place of the peons in such operations.

Mine owners used to have the ore brought to the patios of their haciendas to be worked, and thus their way of mixing it came to be known as the patio process. On my first visit to Mexico I saw miners getting out silver by this patio process, which is still used in the smaller mines in the more remote districts.

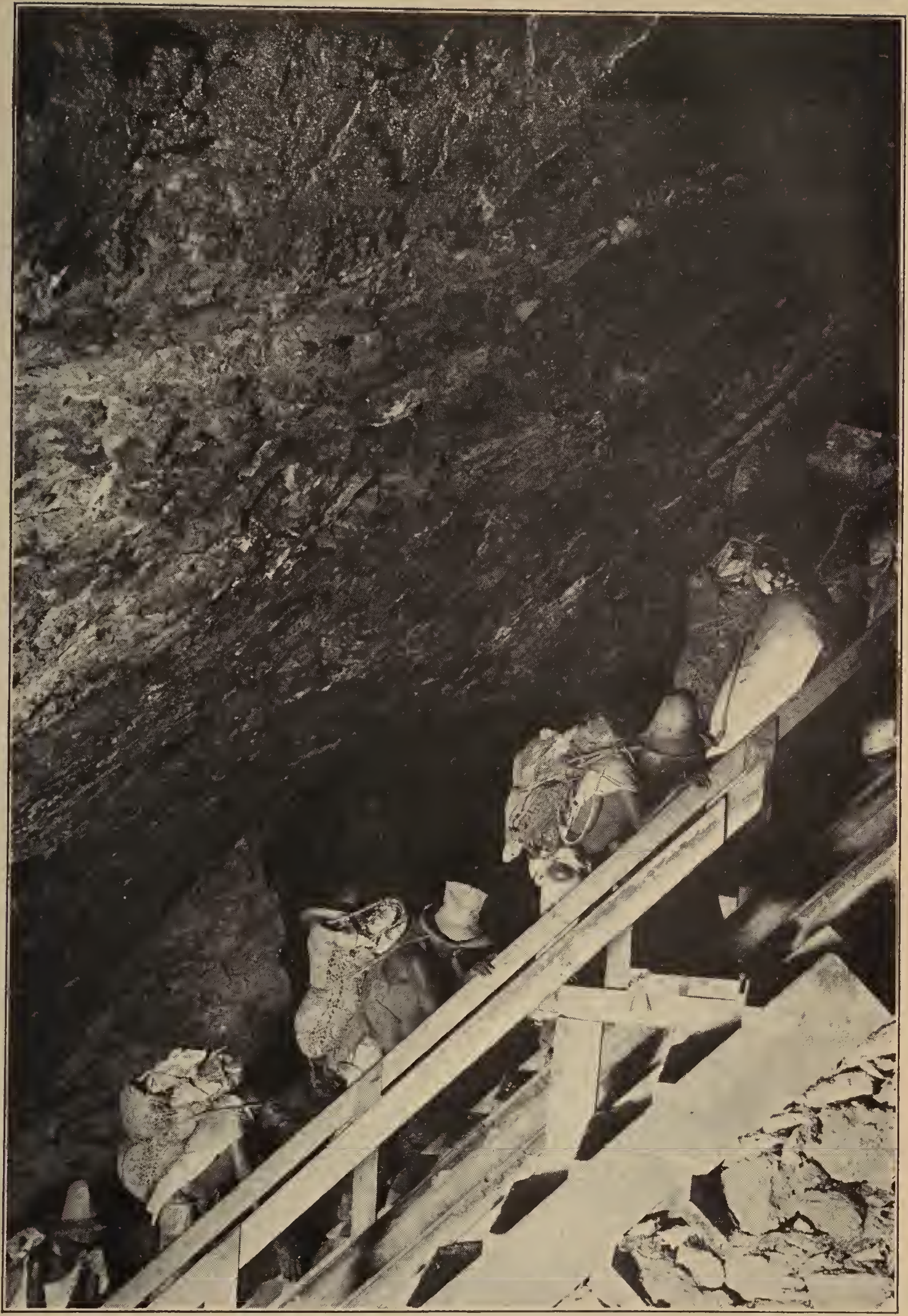
In this method the ore is first ground to a powder and mixed with water until it forms a kind of mud. Vitriol, salt, and quicksilver are added and six or eight blindfolded mules are driven around through the mud for hours until the quicksilver has gone through every part of it. The particles of native silver in the ore are absorbed by the quicksilver, which can then be drawn off and put into a furnace and evaporated, the silver itself remaining behind.

As I saw the mules trotting around in this silver mud, I remarked upon their sorry appearance and was told that only the oldest and poorest animals were used. The reason is that the quicksilver and the acid rot off the hoofs, and after a year or so the mules have to be killed.

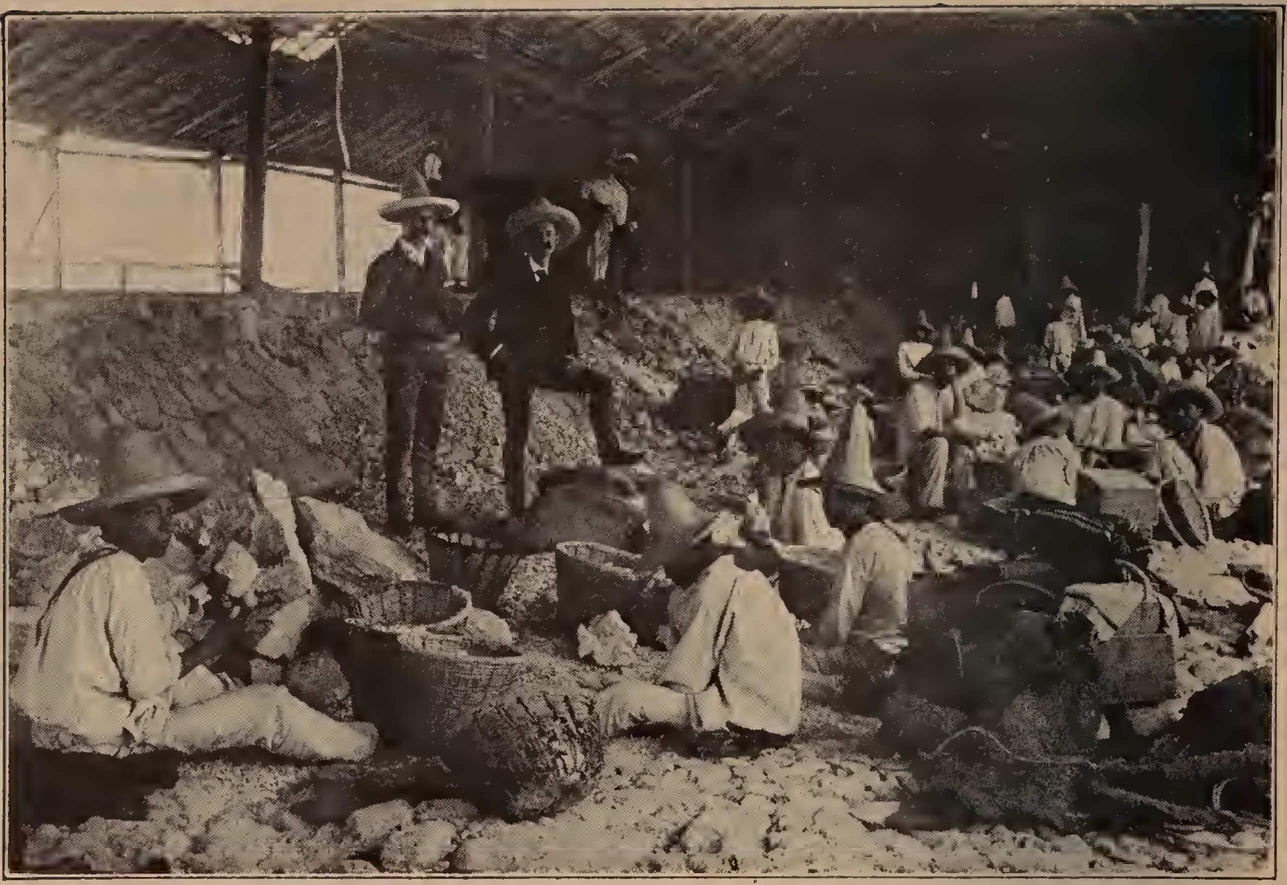
The old methods of mining have left fortunes in silver and gold on the dumps. Many of the mines were far away in the mountains and transportation was so costly that only the rich ore could be worked. When water flooded the mines, drainage was often either too expensive or beyond the skill of the engineers and the work was given up on that account. Some of the best mining properties of to-day are old workings that have been pumped out and re-opened. The Real del Monte near Pachuca, in the state of Hidalgo, was yielding millions when we were fighting with King George over the tax upon tea. It has been abandoned again and again, yet its last owners, a group of Americans, got five million dollars out of it in less than five years.

Almost two centuries ago Real del Monte was owned by a mule driver named Terreros. He soon grew so rich that he loaned the King of Spain a million dollars, and presented him with several warships fully equipped. In return the king gave him a title of nobility, and he was known as the Count of Regla. You may see his bust on the front of the national pawnshop in Mexico City of which he was the founder. Count Regla once asked his sovereign to come over and visit him, saying that he would plate the walls of the king's bedroom with silver and pave the paths in the garden with ingots.

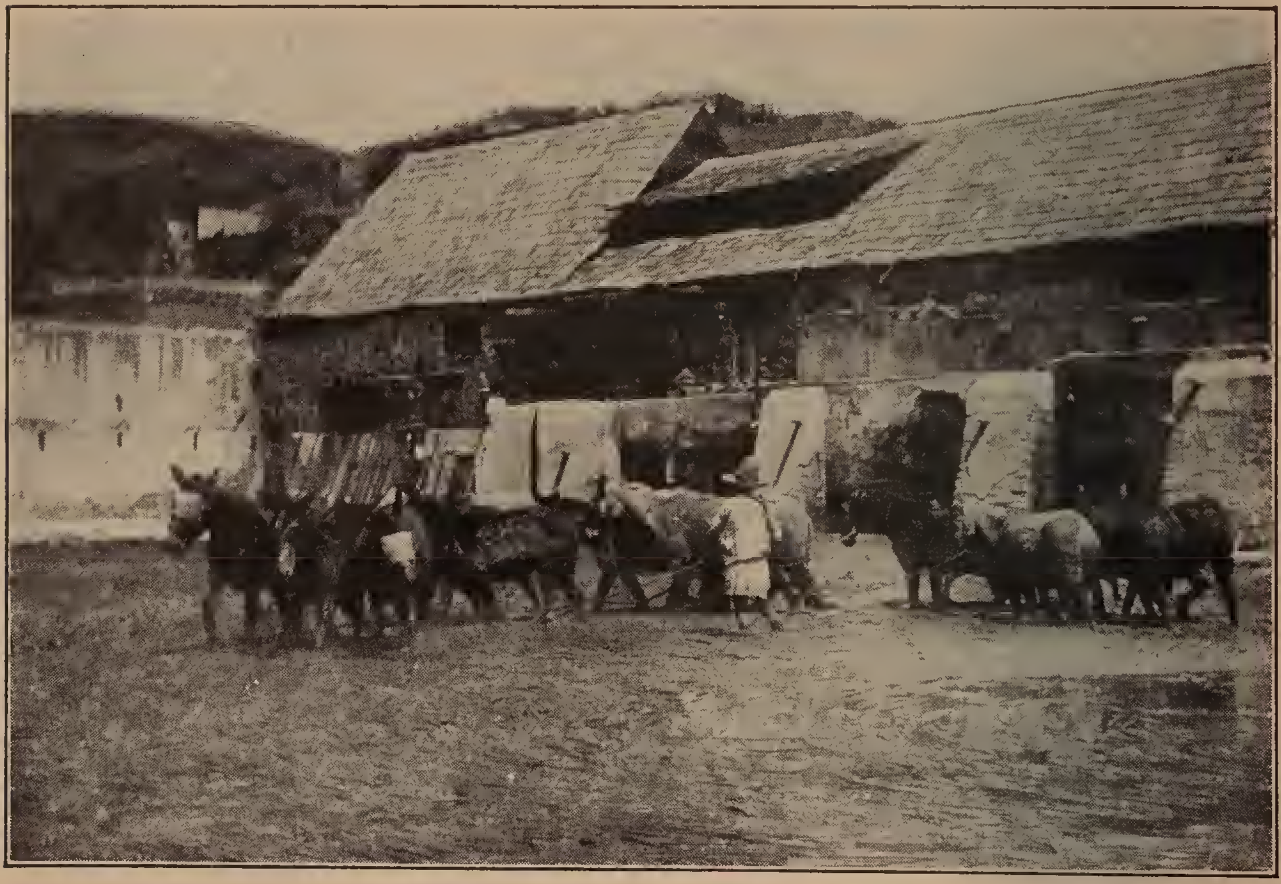
Shortly after Count Regla's death a subterranean river burst into the Real del Monte, and it was under water when Humboldt was here. He described the possibilities of re-opening it in a report that started a mining craze. The property was capitalized and offered in Eng-



Two-hundred-pound bags of ore are raised from some of the old silver mines by peons climbing hundreds of steps day after day. The Spaniards made the burdened Indians crawl up notched logs, from which they often fell to their death.



Modern stamp mills are replacing peons in breaking up silver ore, although some mines still find men cheaper than machinery. In Colonial days women and children did this work in the open and were often blinded by the dust and glare.



In the patio process of silver extraction blindfolded mules are driven round and round through a mixture of ore, water, salt, vitriol, and mercury. The Spaniards formerly used native women in this process, which is ultimately fatal even to mules land. The stock was in such great demand that the five-hundred-dollar shares sold as high as eighty thousand dollars each in the open market. Cornish miners were sent over and shiploads of machinery installed. During the next twenty-five years twenty million dollars were spent in operating the property, and the output was only three fourths of that amount. The company at last went bankrupt, and the mine was taken over by others, who are said to have gotten something like forty million dollars' worth of metal out of their purchase, for which they had paid only one hundred and thirty thousand dollars.

The mines about Guanajuato, which have turned out millions for Americans, had their beginning in the discovery of the La Luz, which yielded more than eight hundred million dollars in silver. This mineral region was known to Cortes, and the La Luz mine was discovered in 1547, only fifty-five years after Columbus made his first voyage. It was found by a company of Spanish soldiers, who made a fire on a rock to keep warm and were amazed to see puddles of silver under the flames. Upon investigation, they found the country to be full of silver. Another mine more lately discovered near the La Luz was the Valenciana, which in a little over a century produced more than three hundred million dollars in silver.

Then these mines filled with water, and the work stopped. They were later bought by American syndicates, and are now being operated by the best of mining machinery. A great electric plant has been installed, the power for which comes from a station more than one hundred miles distant. Some of the old dumps are being worked over, and it is claimed there is enough silver left in them to keep the smelters running for years.

The mines of Parral, one of which gave the peon mining king, Alvarado, his millions, also lie in a territory well known at the time Cortes died. In the year 1600 they had a force of seven thousand miners, most of whom were Indian slaves working under the lash. For a century or so they sent a steady stream of silver across the ocean. The Indians were driven so hard that they avenged themselves by flooding the mines, which remained unused until Americans pumped out the water.

Alvarado was bitterly poor until he made his great strike. He then bought every luxury he could think of, building a great palace, which he filled with so many pianos and canary birds that it was known as the "house of song." One Christmas day he gave away one hundred thousand silver dollars, piling the money on a cart and scattering it about among the peons of Parral. This is the same man who once said he would give ten million dollars to the poor of his country and who even offered to pay the national debt. There are some who put his fortune at seventy-five million dollars.

The stories of the old silver kings read like pages of romance. One of them, Zambrano, took out fifty-five million ounces of silver in twelve years and went to Europe to spend as much of his wealth as he could get rid of. Nevertheless, he left something like sixty millions for his heirs to fight over. The rich Count de Rul, who built the great cathedral at Guanajuato, is said to have squandered a hundred million dollars within a few years. Another silver miner asked the King of Spain for permission to build galleries and portales of silver around his mansion in Mexico, but the king refused on the ground that such magnificence was reserved for royalty alone. The

Guanajuato millionaires were finally forbidden by the Spanish crown to scatter handfuls of silver coin as they rode through the streets, because this habit increased the number of beggars who had already become a great public nuisance.

The Doña Maria de Rodriguez mine, in the state of Sonora, was so named from its owner, a rich widow who managed it herself for a number of years and piled up a great store of silver in bars. At length she decided she would spend the rest of her days in Spain, so she loaded all her treasure on the backs of forty mules, and started for Mexico City. When she arrived with her guards and retainers, and her four tons of pure silver, she put her fortune into the hands of the Spanish viceroy for safe keeping, and told him that at last she breathed freely. But her confidence in the viceroy was sadly misplaced, for she herself was made away with and her treasure appropriated.

There are traditions of lost mines in all parts of Mexico. The prospector's best chance is to take one of the disused workings or lost mines and follow it back to the original vein. I am told that there is a twelve-thousand-acre ranch in Sonora, every square yard of which gives colour to the prospector's pan. The source of this gold was sought for generations, and was finally found in a hill ten miles away, but the vein had been worked out. Some day the soil of the old ranch may be run through the mill for the scattering bits of gold it contains.

In another mining region a prospecting party came across a piece of rock weighing two tons, which was streaked with native silver. It was broken up and reduced and found to be worth four thousand dollars. The prospectors organized a company and searched the whole neighbourhood, finally concluding that the great mass had in some way been carried downstream from a mining territory forty miles distant.

There are a number of old Spanish mines which are worked out and others which cannot be located. One of the latter is the Tiaopa, which the Pima Indians claim was once the greatest mining property of all Mexico. Wonderful stories are told of the San Nicolas mine, in Tamaulipas, which was abandoned at the time of the Mexicans' struggle for independence. According to tradition this mine was so rich that on special occasions the streets of the town were laid with silver ingots, and on others silver bullets were cast from the ore. One of the Estrella del Norte mines in Sonora was "lost" for many years. A notation on an old Jesuit map stated that the "opening of its tunnel could be seen from the door of the Mission Church." For a long time the hills in front of the church were searched in vain. Then in 1905 a wall of the old church gave way, disclosing a hidden door. From this doorway a prospector examined the hillside with his field glass and, like the seeker for treasure in Poe's "Gold Bug," discovered the opening of the lost mine. It yielded a fortune.

CHAPTER VI

WHERE MOTHER EARTH HEATS THE BATH WATER

WE ARE at Aguascalientes, the famous Hot Springs of Mexico. It is altogether different from an American health or summer resort, and it might be bodily transplanted to western India and not seem out of place.

I am sitting in a long, high-ceilinged room on the first floor of my hotel. The hotel is built around a garden full of the most beautiful flowers. It reminds me of a hotel at which I stopped in Jeypore, one of the native states of Hindoostan, save that there I had to have my own servant who slept all night in front of my door. Here I call my boy chambermaid by clapping my hands.

Nine tenths of the houses in Aguascalientes are of one story. All have flat roofs from which the water is drained through pipes of clay that jut out about a foot from the edge of the walls. These walls are thick. They are built of stone or sun-dried brick and are stuccoed where they face the street. This stucco has been painted in delicate blues, pinks, and yellows, making the whole town one mass of rainbow colours, which shine out under the bright Mexican sun. None of the houses have gardens in front of them. They are built close up to the cobblestone sidewalks so that in going through the town one seems to be passing between gaily coloured billboards all ready for the posters. In the centre of each house-front is a hole for a door. The poorer houses have doors roughly made, and on my drive from the station I saw few windows on the sides facing the street.

Many of the doorways were filled with queer-looking, dark-faced people. The men in their bright-coloured blankets looked picturesque, and the women, with their mahogany faces, their long black hair streaming down their backs, freshly wet from their last bath in the hot waters, were in some cases pretty, and in others as homely as the Witch of Endor after an attack of smallpox.

On my way I passed the public bath houses—low Spanish buildings where one can get a bath for from twenty-five cents to one dollar—and went on up a long, dusty thoroughfare under wide-spreading green trees into the business part of the town.

Aguascalientes, although sleepy looking, has cotton mills, tobacco factories, tanneries, pottery works, and railroad shops, besides its smelters for silver ores. It used to be noted for the beautiful linen drawn-work made by the women in their homes and either sent off to Mexico City or sold at the trains to the tourists. A famous piece of drawn-work was the dress designed by a woman of Aguascalientes for an exhibition in Paris. It was nine years in the making and three hundred expert needle-women worked upon it. Not a seam appeared in its filmy fabric. Of late years, however, more and more of the women and girls of the town have been drawn into the factories, although factory work is still somewhat looked down upon by the middle-class women. Much of the so-called drawn-work sold in Mexico nowadays is cheap imitation stuff made in Germany, and the traveller has to be careful in buying.

Another industry is the making of tiny hats of horsehair just like the Mexican sombrero. They are sold by the thousands to tourists.

I have been impressed here by the poverty of the people. The peons seem scarcely to know how badly off they are. The men dress in white cotton, but about their shoulders they wear blankets of all the colours of the rainbow that give a certain grace and dignity to their appearance. If you will take a red woollen blanket and throw it about you some morning as you hop out of bed in your snow-white pajamas, you will get some idea of the Mexican peon as he looks on the street.

Your hair, however, must be as black as the wing of the raven; you must stain your face with walnut juice, and put on your head a gorgeous sombrero in a more or less dilapidated condition. You must get a piece of dirty sole leather so large that your foot can stand in it and leave a half inch of space all round. Tie this on with leather straps, first cracking the skin on your heels and blacking the soles of your feet until they look more rough and tough than the leather itself. After you have done this you will present a faint caricature of the twentieth-century descendant of the Aztecs of old.

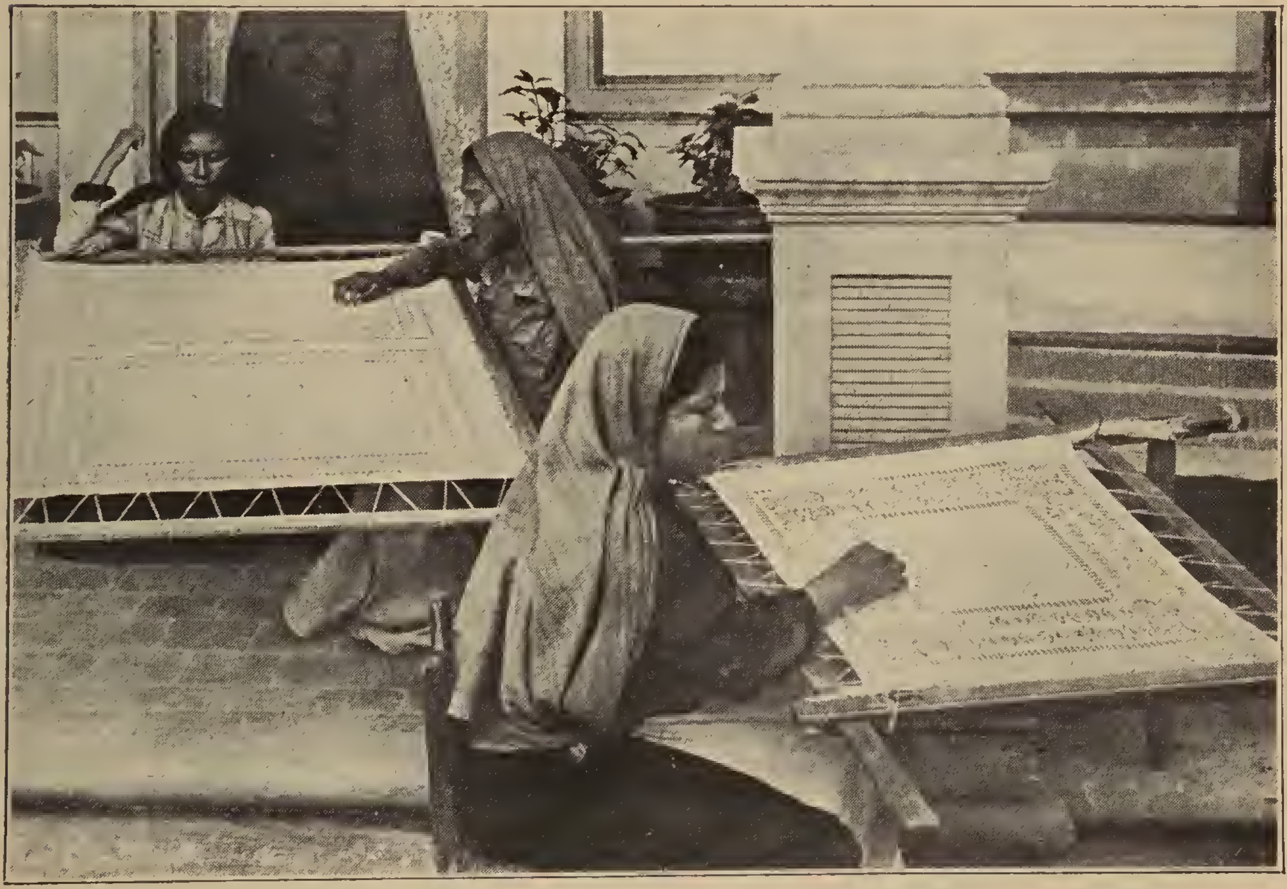
But as you are now, you represent only the Aztec at rest. The Aztec at work is a different matter. You will see him in as many occupations as those followed by his brother *fellah* in Egypt. He carries on his back the heavy burdens of the country. He lugs about Mexican beer in pigskins as the Bengalese carrier peddles water. You see him in a hundred different aspects on every street, and in each one he is a new picture. An American artist here, who has spent seven winters in Egypt sketching, says he finds Mexico a more fertile field than the well-worked countries of Europe.

Although their plumage is less gay, the Indian women are as interesting as the men. Their dark lustrous eyes look at you with a strange wonder out of their olive-skinned faces. Up to thirty they have a striking beauty, but after that they age rapidly, and hard work and poor food make them wrinkled and old at thirty-five. They are better looking and more picturesque than the higher classes. Their dress takes me back to the East. They often wear dark blue cottons and drape about their heads cotton shawls, or *rebosos*, so that only the upper half of the face shows. I have also seen some of these women in bright red skirts and white waists. Many of them go barefooted.

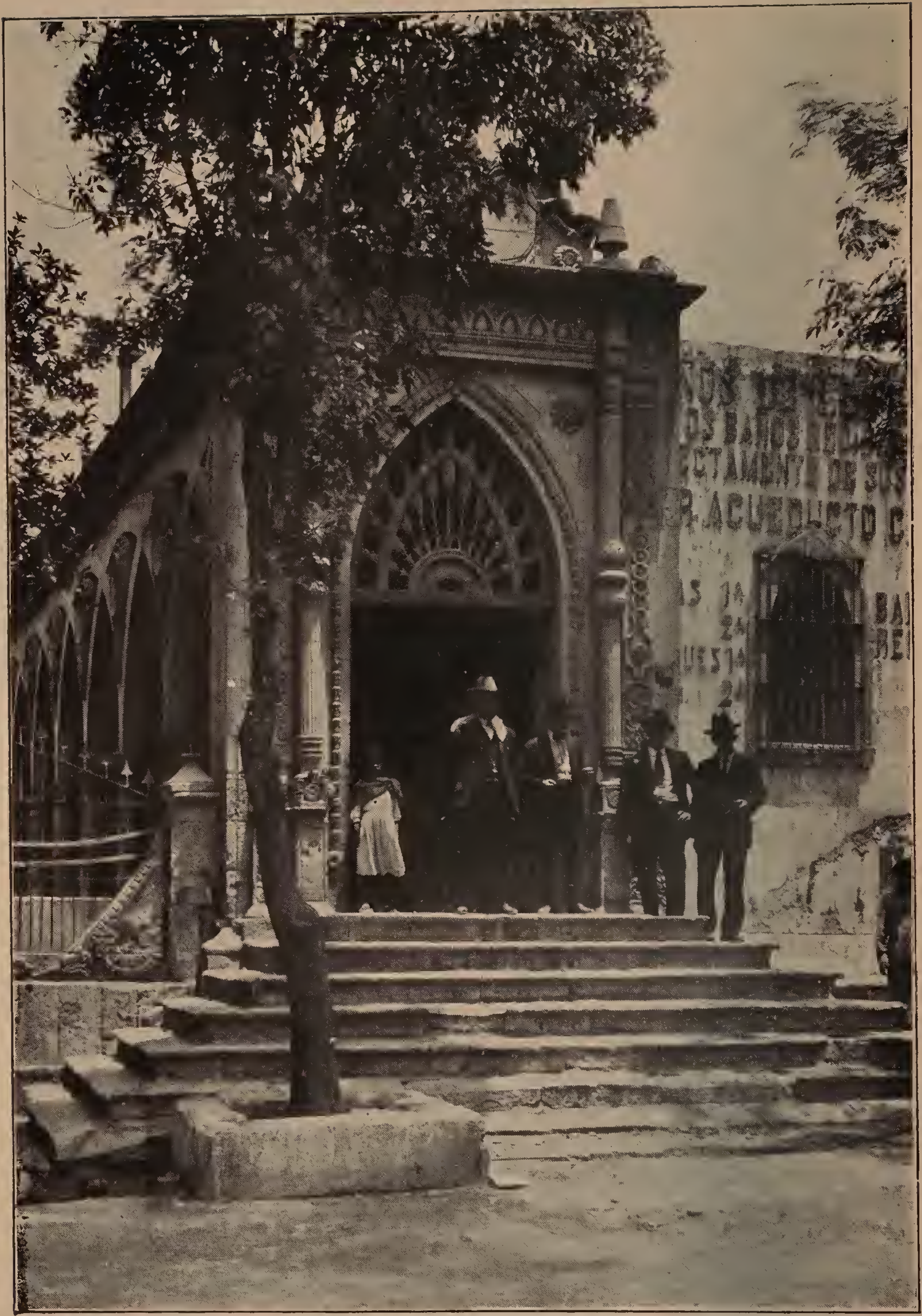
Yet despite the poverty one sees everywhere, the land is rich. In coming from Zacatecas to Aguascalientes, I rode for miles through fields vying in their fertility with the valleys of the Nile or the Ganges. Indeed, this section is often called the garden of Mexico.

It certainly is a wonderfully rich garden, and crops of all kinds grow here in the greatest luxuriance. It is more than a mile above the sea and the air seems to revivify the land so that it produces two crops a year without any manure. From here to Mexico City, a day's ride on a train, one goes through a farmer's paradise, and plains of rich crops stretch away from each side of the road until their green fades out into the hazy blue of the mountains in the distance. This region of Mexico has a good rainfall during the wet season, but there is also much irrigation. I have noticed that some of the people use the same means of raising the water that I

Hot baths out of doors are a feature of daily life near the steaming springs of Mexico. From them the state of Aguascalientes gets its name, Spanish for "hot water."



The women of Aguascalientes used to be noted for their fine linen drawnwork. Three hundred women once worked on a single piece, which was nine years in the stitching. Nowadays factory-made goods are driving out the ancient home industry.



The baths at Aguascalientes have a series of rooms with the temperature of the water within marked over each door. The continually running water comes from hot and cold springs and is like blue crystal.

have seen about Osaka in western Japan. This consists of a long pole, with a weight on one end and a bucket on the other, which is pivoted to a second pole set upright in the ground. As with our old-fashioned well sweep, the bucket is lowered into the water, then raised and swung around and emptied into the irrigation canal through which the sparkling water flows like a stream of silver amid the green.

The greater part of the country north of here on the line of the old Mexican Central railroad is desert. I have already told you how the big mining town of Zacatecas has men who make water-peddling their business. In the dry towns without modern waterworks the peddlers still carry about on their backs immense water-jars of red pottery about four feet long and a foot in diameter, tilting them over as they serve their customers. In one small plateau town I have seen the police guarding the only working fountain of the place, allowing but a few men and women to dip water out at a time. Back of them under the blaze of the hot sun squatted other men and women, with gourds, crocks, or battered oil cans, waiting their turn.

Aguascalientes means "hot water." Its hot springs are among the finest in the world, and the people come by the thousands to bathe in their health-giving waters. Some of the springs have water so hot as to cause bathers to faint after staying in a short while. In some, the patients not only plunge into the steaming baths but drink quantities of the hot water, so that profuse perspiration is brought on.

The big municipal bath-house has excellent bathing facilities. It consists of a number of rooms with baths almost big enough to swim in, filled with running water. Over the door of each room is marked the temperature of the water within. The bather is furnished with towels, soap in a tin dish that floats, and the twist of vegetable fibre which the Mexicans use for scrubbing themselves. After the bath, he may sit wrapped in a sheet in a steamer chair or lie on a cot while he smokes his cigarette or sips a glass of sherry. At some of the bath-houses in Mexico City music is played in the patios, and the men and the women, who have separate sections, sit in the corridors and visit about, smoking or taking refreshments.

The big bath-house is near the station on the edge of the town, but I have preferred to go to the old baths at the springs about a mile out in the country. Picture to yourself a long avenue of great cypress trees which almost meet far above your head and shut out the glare of the Mexican sun and the blazing silver of the clear sky. Let these trees go on and on until they almost meet in the distance. Let the sides of the road be carpeted with the greenest of grass and, on the right as you walk toward the bath, let the steam be rising from a stream of steel-blue water that flows toward you. Think of this steel-blue stream as confined in a little aqueduct of white stone about three feet wide and four feet in depth. Now you have the background of the picture.

This stream is the overflow from the hot springs. It is also the bathing and laundry place of the common people. They are here by the hundreds—men and women, girls and boys, lovers and sweethearts—all bathing together in the warm, refreshing, and health-giving waters. Many of them have washed their clothes while in the water and spread them out on the green banks to dry. White shirts and trousers, red skirts, and many bright bits of colour made by serapes cover the green banks under the trees while their owners are splashing and playing and scrubbing themselves in the trench just below.

Here is a man bathing while his wife looks on from the bank and the sun streaming through the trees paints his dark skin a rich mahogany. There is a Venus washing some clothes by rubbing them on a rough stone, and yonder under a tree a half-dressed Indian lies sound asleep. I point my camera, and his wife springs up from the stone where she is washing and stands over him as though she fears the camera may be some newfangled gun. I press the button and the lens does the rest.

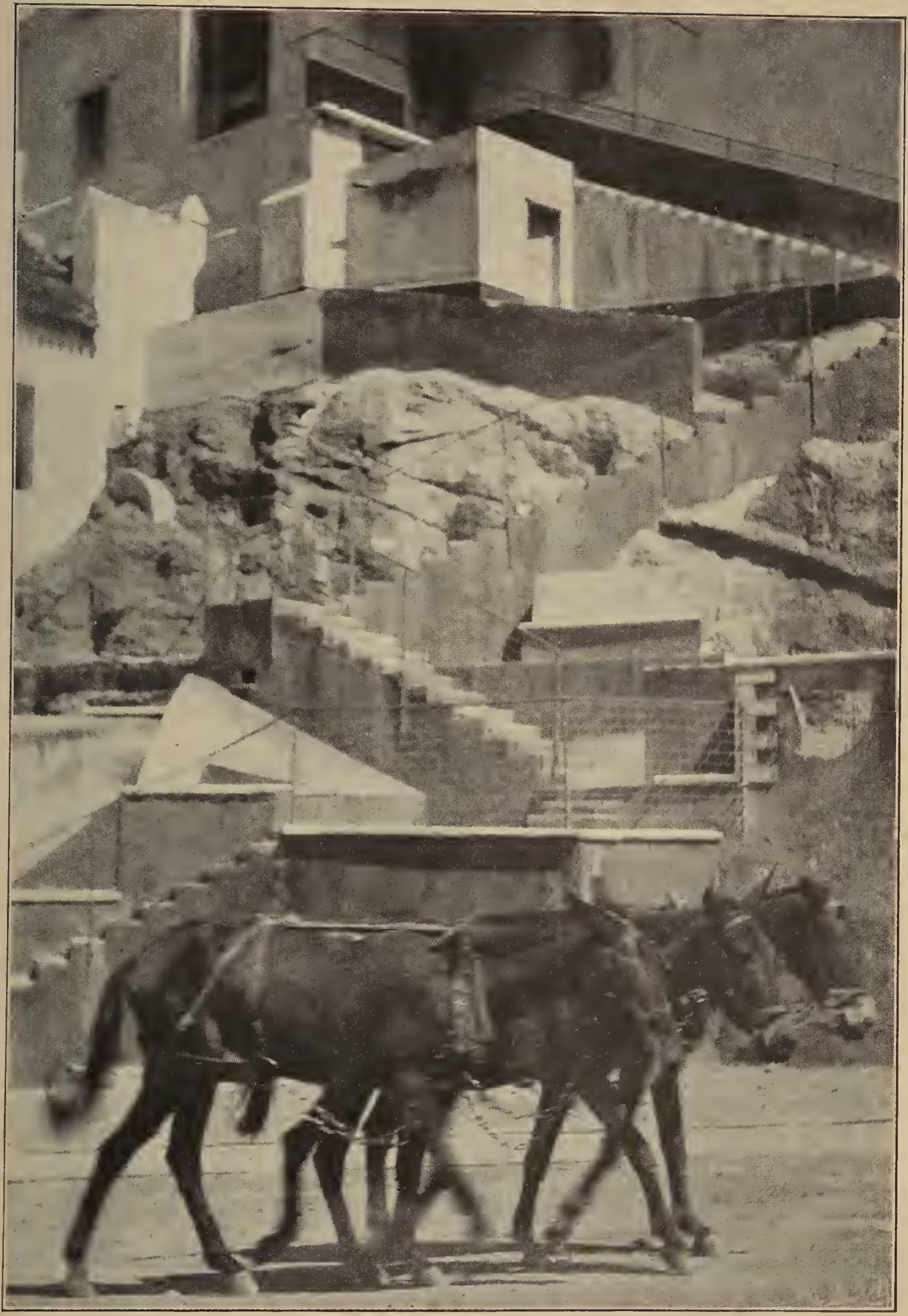
I walk along the stream and amuse myself by taking notes of the people. They see nothing wrong in mixed bathing, and I see nothing indecent in their behaviour. They consider it quite proper for families and friends to go in together, and I have again forced upon me the feeling that modesty and immodesty are mere matters of fashion. As I look, I am reminded of a little maiden in Egypt who, upon my approach, covered her head with her skirt that she might modestly hide her face from the eyes of a man.

While I was taking my snapshots, a fierce-looking Mexican officer galloped up with a troop of thirty horsemen, each of whom looked like a brigand. Every man of them scowled at me from under a hat at least two feet in width, and their prancing horses, irritated by murderous spurs, jumped about in uncomfortable proximity to my feet. I feared arrest and thought, of course, the officer was going to object to my taking the pictures. But he gave me to understand by signs that he wanted me to photograph himself and his troop. I consented and he arranged them as I directed.

The minute I had snapped the camera the officer wanted to see the picture. I tried to explain to him that the film must first be developed and that it would have to go through a chemical process before it would be ready to print. He did not understand. He jabbered at me in Spanish and I retorted in English. At length I made him understand that he must come in a day or two to my hotel to get the picture, and he and his soldiers then took themselves off.

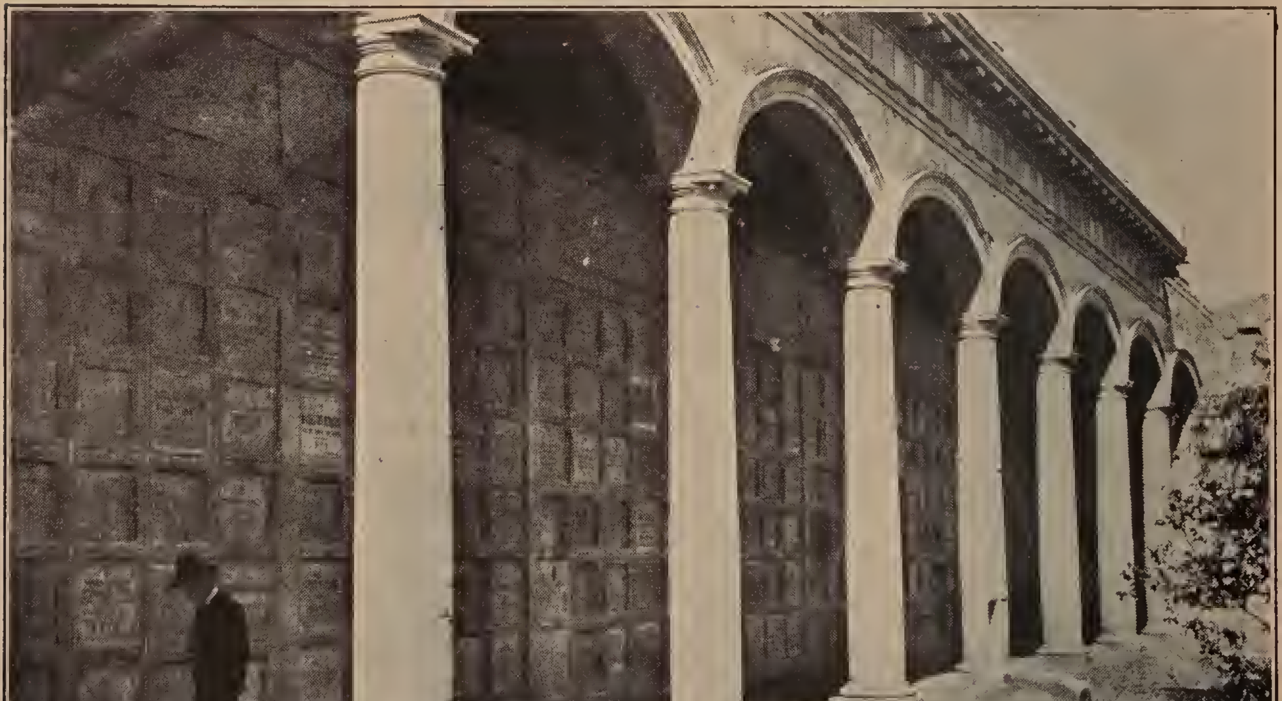
The sights at Aguascalientes might lead one to believe that the Mexican peon delights in bathing. But I have learned in my travels that this is far from being the case. The native Indian of the hot country, it is true, is a frequent bather, because of the heat. But on the plateau, where one seldom perspires except under greater exertion than the average peon puts forth, it is said that he bathes only once in the year, on the day of St. John the Baptist, June 24th. The rest of the time he generally goes about in filthy rags and with his bare feet caked with dirt. When there is an epidemic of any sort in the cities, particularly of typhus, the police go around and take the dirtiest of the peons to the nearest public bath-houses and see that they and their clothes get a good washing. The victims often shout as they go: "No soap! No soap!" for the peon hates soap as the devil hates holy water.

Except in the most modern houses and the up-to-date hotels, bathtubs are still rare in Mexico. In Mexico City the hotels have rooms with bath, but outside the capital and in the small towns the guest inquiring for the



In Guanajuato, a typical mining town of northern Mexico, the houses are jumbled together in a long, narrow gorge. Sometimes the roof of one adobe building will be just below the doorstep of the house next above it.

With its flat-roofed houses, and walled courts that look like open boxes, Guanajuato reminds one of the ancient cities of Palestine and Egypt.



Like so many pigeonholes or drawers in a giant filing case, the niches of the court-yard wall are filled with the bodies of the dead, and sealed with blocks of stone or cement each bearing the name of its occupant.

bath may be directed to the nearest river. Many of the public bath-houses are hundreds of years old. In Durango is one where water is piped from a stream into a little swimming pool big enough for only three or four people. Tepic has a bath-house that covers an acre. It is an immense stone building with the reception rooms and bathrooms surrounding twenty-two springs. In some of the cities a hotel will have but one or two bathrooms for each floor and these perhaps only showers.

Besides its hot springs and baths, Aguascalientes has a feature which has given it the name: "The Perforated City." This is the system of underground tunnels that honeycomb its foundations. Nobody knows who dug them or why, as there is nothing about them in the records of the Aztecs or of the other former inhabitants.

CHAPTER VII

GUANAJUATO AND ITS STRANGE CEMETERY

SURELY the strangest burying ground of the world is here at Guanajuato!

I have visited many queer graveyards but none that compares with the one from which I have just returned. I have stood in the lonely garden of the Wat Sah Kai in Bangkok, Siam, where the dead are thrown for burial. I have seen vultures by the hundreds swoop down upon the naked bodies of the dead Parsees placed inside the Towers of Silence at Bombay, and have wandered among the tombs of the hundred generations of Chinamen that fill the sides of the White Cloud Mountains near the city of Canton. I have admired the sculptured marbles representing living wives bending over their deceased husbands in the Campo Santo in Genoa, have seen the dead piled naked on top of one another in the cemetery at Naples, and lost my way among the bone receptacles of the catacombs at Rome. I have explored the mummy tombs of Egypt near the abode of Tut-ankh-amen, watched the dead Hindoos sizzle on the burning ghats of the Ganges, and seen the cremations and the quicklime burials of the Japanese. But this Mexican cemetery is stranger than all others. Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I should hardly have believed in its existence.

Imagine, if you can, the bones of one hundred thousand human beings piled on top of one another. Put those of all ages together. Tear them limb from limb and mix up the mass of skulls, legs, arms, and ribs, until the different skeletons lose themselves in a vast heap in a vaulted granary of bones. This gives only a faint idea of what I saw to-day. The cemetery is situated on the top of a high hill overlooking Guanajuato. I rode up to it on a donkey and was admitted by an Indian who had a hat fully a foot high on his dark head, a revolver a foot long in his leather belt, and a pair of tight buckskin pantaloons about his lean legs.

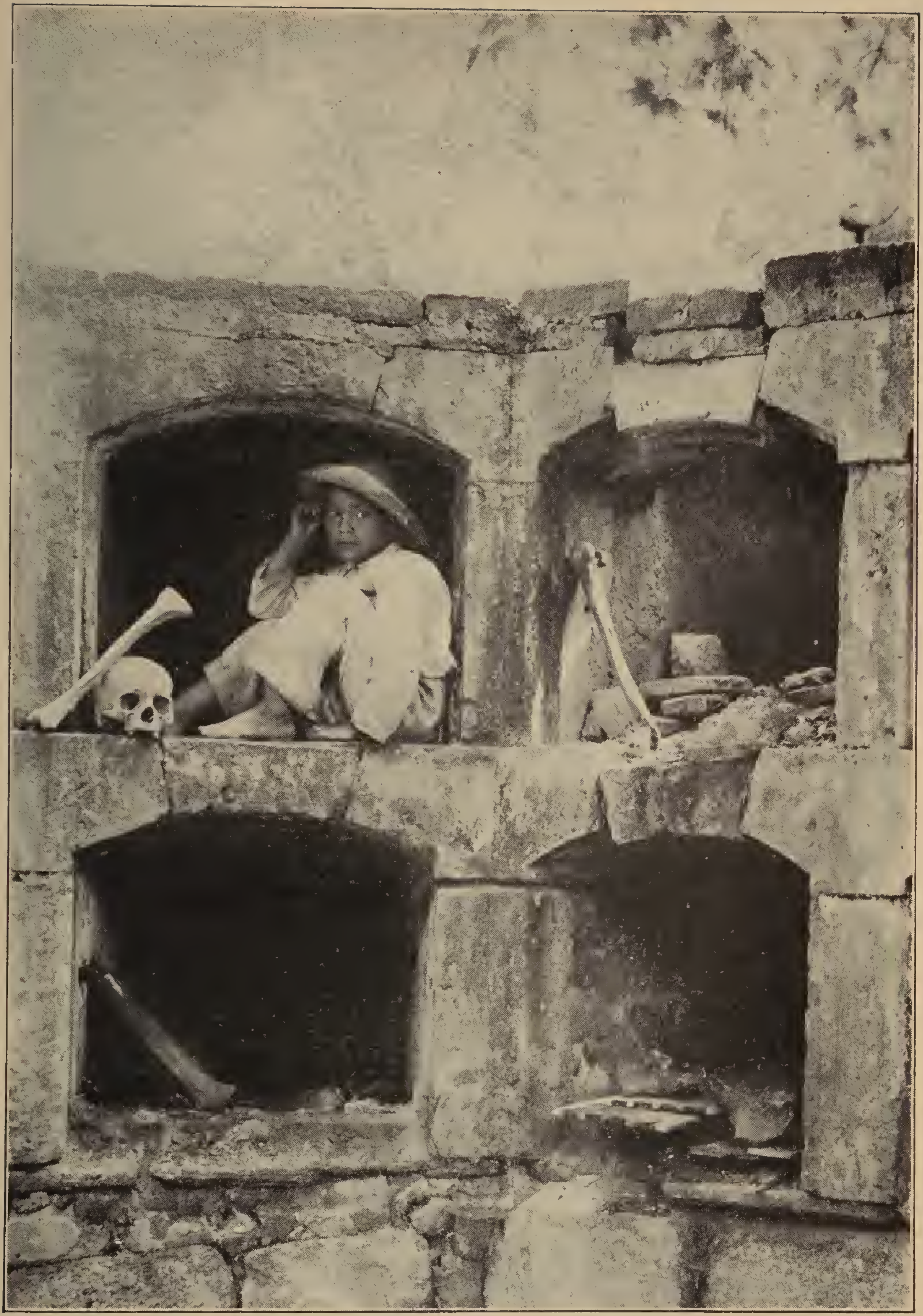
Entering the cemetery by a wide gate, I found myself surrounded by the great walls of a court covering perhaps three acres of ground. The walls were eight feet thick. They were honeycombed with pigeonholes about three feet square and six feet in depth, some open and others closed with marble slabs and blocks of cement. On the slabs were inscribed the names and virtues of the dead shelved within. There were thousands of these pigeonholes.

From a printed card my guide showed me, I learned that the spaces are rented. He said that most of them are engaged for terms of five years, after which the bones of the deceased are taken out, and the holes cleaned and made ready for other tenants. The rent of one for five years is equal to what you probably pay for your apartment every month, and one can have his grave box perpetually if he will pay about four times as much. There are also family rates which permit the crowding of parents and children, one after another, into the same pigeonhole.

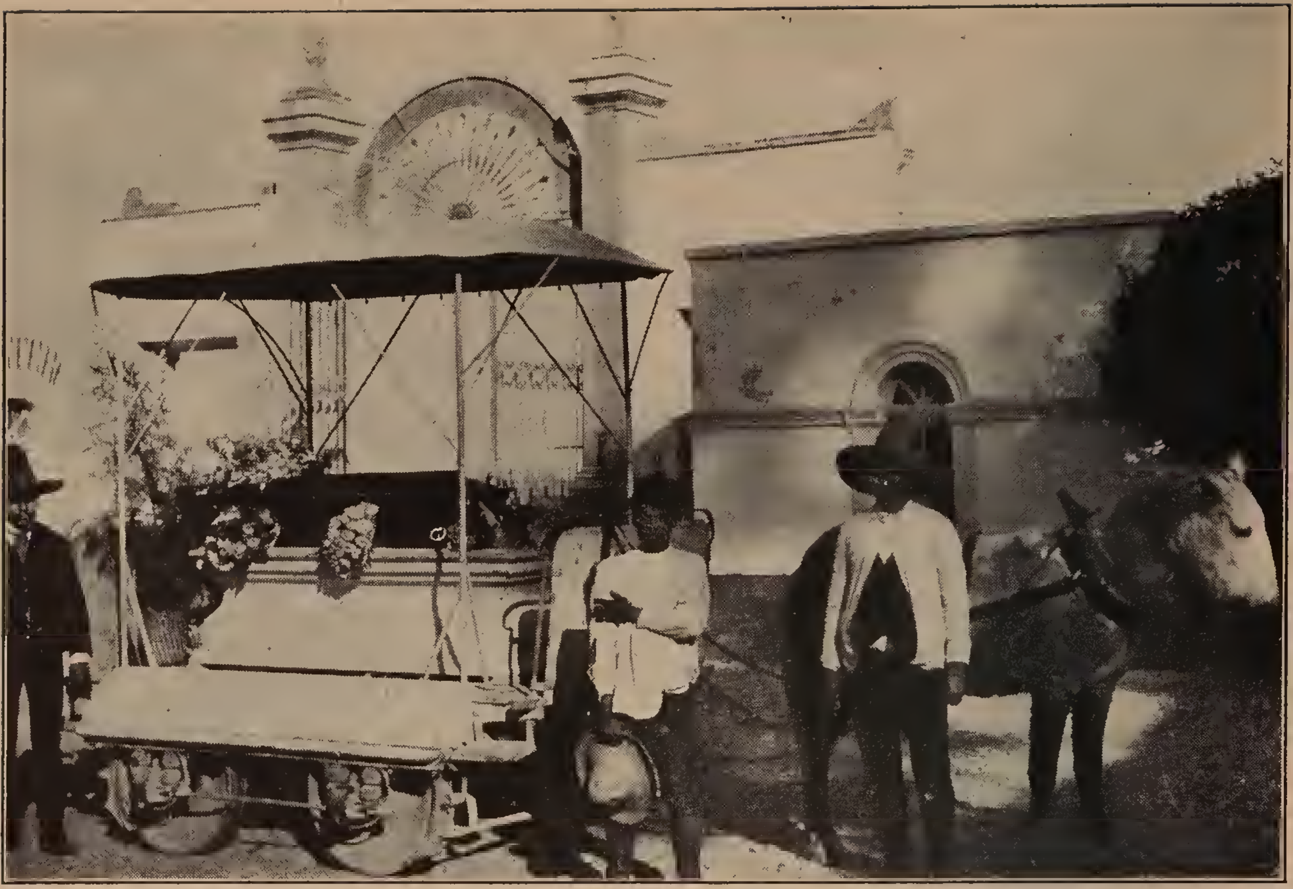
Even such rates are more than the poorest people can afford. Consequently their dead are usually buried in holes in the ground, which, like those in the wall, are rented, though for a much shorter term. For the sum of one dollar a body is allowed to rest undisturbed for two years. At the end of that time the remains are dug up and another body put in their place. As the result of this system, the soil of the cemetery courtyard is literally made up of crumbled bones. Every time a body is removed, pieces of the skeleton are left behind and the ground is surfaced with the dust of past humanity.

The grave usually dug for the bodies of the poor is about two feet wide, seven feet long, and from six to eight feet deep. The first corpse that comes gets the bottom berth. He is taken out of his rented coffin and laid in with his head on a bunch of leaves. His body is covered with earth to a depth of perhaps six inches. The grave is then ready for the next arrival, who is buried in like manner, and other bodies are sandwiched one on top of the other until the hole is filled. During the past month there were four burials a day in this cemetery, and I saw six deep graves already dug when I was there to-day. Three of them were only half filled and the others were empty.

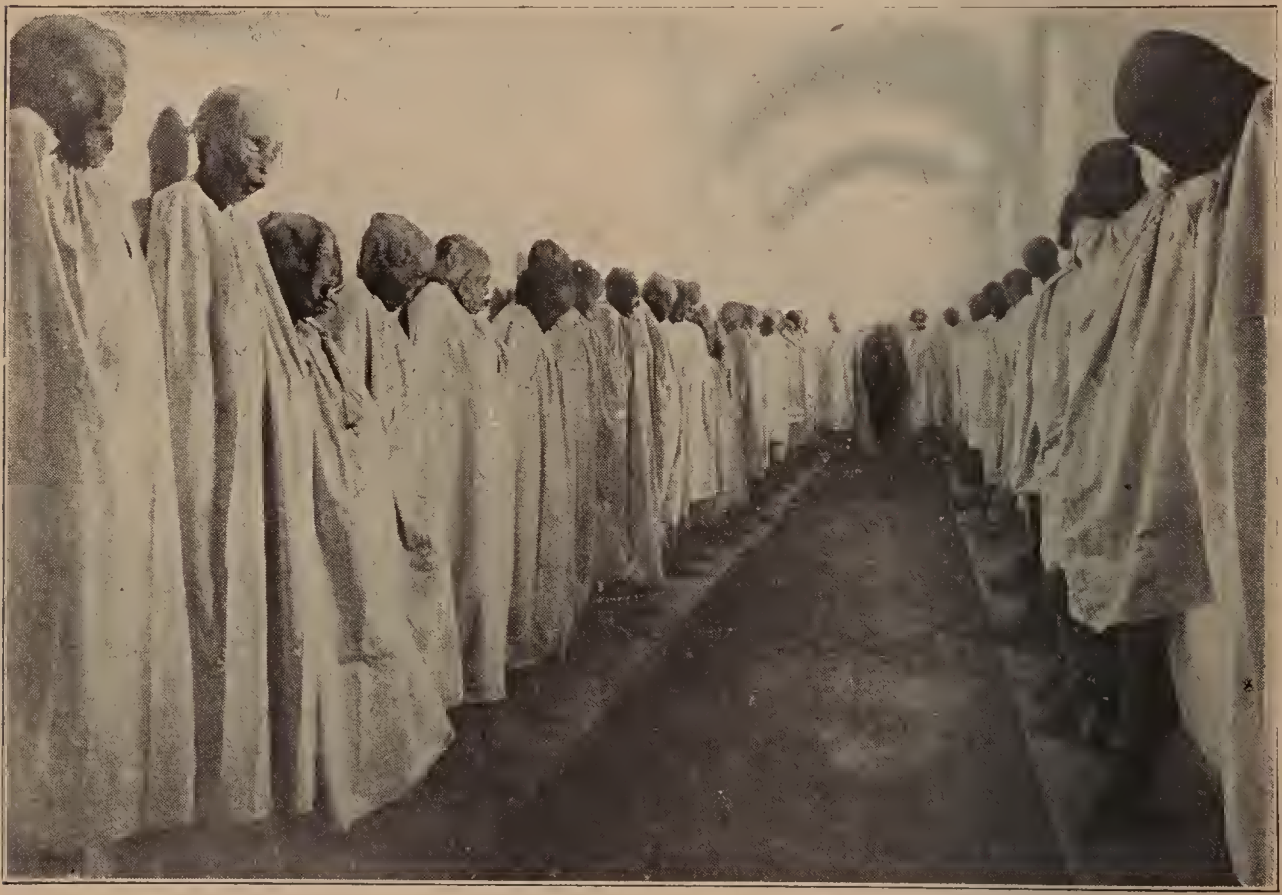
From the courtyard I was led into the great storehouse where the bones of the dead are put after their leases have expired and they have been ousted by their landlords from the tenements above. Going down a winding stair so narrow that my sides grazed the walls as I passed, we entered a long vaulted passage walled with stones and paved with cement. This passage was well lighted by openings from above. It runs clear around and under the edge of the cemetery. It is a stone tunnel about twelve feet high, six feet wide, and more than one thousand feet long. For ages this tunnel has been the receptacle of the bones of



A pigeon-hole for the dead is ordinarily rented for a term of five years, after which, if no more rent is paid, the body is thrown out like a useless document, to make room for another tenant.



Trolley or horse-car hearses, ranging from mere platforms on wheels for the poor to elaborate conveyances with all sorts of funeral trappings for the rich, are common in Mexico. There are little white cars for children.



"In a long, vaulted tunnel in the Guanajuato cemetery I saw at least a hundred mummies, more horrible than anything in the museum at Cairo. The bodies had been preserved, not by embalming but by the extreme dryness of the air and the soil" the dead of the city, and it is now almost filled. I stood at the entrance and looking either way I could see the great piles of skulls and other parts of skeletons jumbled together in all sorts of shapes and mixed up into one heterogeneous mass in the great democracy of death.

Some of the bodies were mummified, and leaning against the wall, they guarded, as it were, the remains of the thousands of broken skeletons beyond them. There were at least one hundred of the mummies, each more horrible than anything in the museum at Cairo in Egypt, or the South American and Alaskan mummies in our National Museum in Washington. These bodies do not owe their gruesome state of preservation to careful embalming with spices and tight wrapping in fine linen bands, but rather to the extreme dryness of the air and the soil. They retain the features of the dead, although their faces are shrivelled and covered with wrinkles.

There against the wall is propped the mummy of a bearded man. His face is intact and his whiskers, faded into a bleached dust colour by the years, cover the whole of the lower part of his face. His clothes have long since rotted away, but he, like the rest of the ghastly crew, is shrouded from chin to heel with a sheet. I see that a part of an old boot still clings to one of his feet, and that the other foot has disappeared. Next stands the mummy of a woman, whose white teeth are as well preserved in death as in life. She has a wealth of long black hair reaching to her waist and even yet shows some traces of beauty and grace.

The coffins in which the dead are taken to the cemetery are often rented. Many of them are so big that another and smaller one can be put inside. There are no hearses in this mountain city, and the dead are carried on the shoulders of bearers up the steep hill to the cemetery. As soon as a funeral party passes through the gate the coffins are placed on a ledge or stone table and opened. This is for the purpose, it is said, of seeing that none contains more than one corpse and that the cemetery is not thus cheated out of its fees. When a body is buried in a coffin the lid is not screwed down, as with us, but locked, and the key given to the relative who pays the cemetery rent. I saw men at work making coffins in a number of shops along the road up to the cemetery. The caskets, although rudely thrown together, are so expensive that the poor cannot buy them. Those intended for babies are painted a light blue or are grained in oak. At Zacatecas I saw a boy carrying a blue coffin on his head, but whether he was on his way to the cemetery or not, I could not tell.

The mourning customs in Mexico are somewhat different from ours. The people wear black even for intimate friends and for distant relatives. The periods of mourning are much shorter than with us, but the occasions are so frequent that every lady keeps at least one black dress in her wardrobe. For instance, when a girl dies, her friends wear black for thirty days, but if it is the girl's mother who is dead, the friends will put on black for only half that time. Ladies do not attend funerals in Mexico, but they pay visits of condolence, wearing mourning clothes. Such friends as are unable to call immediately after a death send to the family their cards and letters of regret. As a rule funerals are held soon after death, for the general law requires interment within twenty-four hours. The card announcements of funerals are often of the most touching and extravagant nature.

In many of the cities there are street-car hearses, and the car lines make a good thing out of their funeral business. In Mexico City one sees these black-draped cars spinning along the road toward the cemetery at all hours of the day. The funeral car used by the comparatively well-to-do has a raised place in its centre for the coffin. It is open at the sides but has a black canopy at the top, and its decorations are more or less elaborate, according to the means of the bereaved family. Behind it comes a second car containing the mourners. Some of the higher-priced cars are covered with silk, and those for infants or young people are often trimmed with white satin. The poor have a closed car with doors at the back. It is fitted up with shelves upon which the coffins are piled. Attached to this is a cheap-looking car, painted black, in which the relatives are transported to the funeral.

Mexican cemeteries are often located within the city limits and on hills and slopes, where, because of the methods of burial, they are a menace to health. The carelessness of the Mexican in most matters of sanitation is amazing. One reason for the great growth in the population of Mexico City in the past twenty years is the fact that the sanitary improvements, on which Diaz spent $15,000,000, have cut down the death rate. It is still high, but at the time of my first visit to Mexico one hundred and fifty people died in the capital every day. Now the number of deaths is less than one hundred, or at the annual rate of fifty-six to the thousand.

At Guanajuato I am drinking only boiled or bottled water. Great reservoirs furnish the people an abundant supply, but this is piped into the city without being purified, and doubtless is polluted with drainage from the surrounding hills.

I find Guanajuato quite as picturesque as its name, which means "Hill of Frogs." It is said that the ancient Chichimec Indians found here a great stone chiselled to represent a gigantic frog, which they adopted and worshipped as their local divinity. The city is nearly a mile and a half above the sea. Therefore the air is bracing, and Nature wears a perpetual smile of blue skies and bright flowers. The town is surrounded by mountain peaks, of which I had a fine view from the hill where the cemetery is situated.

These mountains are treasure houses of silver and gold, and doubtless the very hillside in which the dead are buried has its share of these precious metals. Years before our Revolutionary War Guanajuato was recognized as one of the great centres for the production of silver, and its fabulously rich mines were exploited for the Church and the Spanish crown. Many of them are still worked, but under the ownership of American corporations.

Guanajuato is famous for its old churches, most of which were built as thank-offerings by mine owners who had made fortunes here. Perhaps the finest of all is the Church of La Valenciana, built on a lofty height about two miles from the city. It was erected by Count de Rul, once the poor peon Antonio Obregon and later the proprietor of La Valenciana, then the richest of all the Guanajuato mines. He spent forty thousand dollars on the altar, which is covered with silver ornaments. In the old days, each of the thousands of miners employed in La Valenciana gave the church every week a piece of ore the size of the hand, so that from this source alone it had an income of twenty-five thousand dollars a year for the support of its magnificent service. Now there is only one priest left in charge of the great edifice.

It is said that the church stands on one of the richest silver deposits of Count de Rul. As soon as this was discovered he was offered huge sums for the privilege of working the bonanza. It was even proposed to take down the building stone by stone and then put it up again on another site. But the count refused, and so it stands to-day almost exactly as when it was dedicated, more than one hundred and thirty years ago.

From the church there is a fine view of Guanajuato, jumbled together in its long, narrow, and winding gorge, with mountains heaped up on all sides of it. In the centre of the city is the principal plaza with its shady trees and perpetually blooming flowers. Facing this plaza is the magnificent Juarez Theatre, built of the pale green stone found near by. It took twenty years to complete it and it cost more than one million dollars. The side streets climb the steep hills and sometimes have cobblestone steps from one level to another. Many of them are merely precipitous and irregular stone-paved paths, so narrow that two people can scarcely squeeze past each other in going up and down. The houses are adobe huts, and flat-roofed, stucco buildings of pink, cream, and pale blue. Sometimes the roof of one house will be just below the doorstep of the one next above it.

The old prison in Guanajuato is one of the most famous buildings in all Mexico. It served as a fortress in the time of the Spaniards, who built it. The great hill that towers above the building is called Quarter Mountain, so named from the fact that many a condemned criminal was here drawn and quartered, and one quarter was spiked to a post as a warning to all evildoers.

Hidalgo and his followers captured the stronghold in the early days of Mexico's struggle for independence. Later he and his lieutenants were captured and put to death here by the Spaniards. Their heads were cut off and placed in iron cages suspended from great hooks on the four corners of the building. When the revolution was finally successful, the skulls were taken to the Cathedral, in Mexico City, and placed in a crystal urn which is kept covered with flowers. But the hooks for the cages are still in their places.

Nowadays the old prison houses some five hundred criminals, who lounge about its sunny patio, smoking, playing cards, washing their clothes in the fountain in the centre, or weaving hats, baskets, and brushes to sell for pocket money. With this they buy food and so do not have to depend on the barrels of government rations sent in twice a day. Sometimes one of the prisoners is called to an iron door in the wall to hear the verdict some judge has given in his case, for trial by jury is not the custom in Mexico. In one of the rooms opening on the patio there is a school for the convicts, but I understand that this is not well attended.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE MEXICAN RAILWAYS

TO-DAY I have been riding for hours in a second-class coach, giving up my more comfortable accommodations in order to study the people. Our way from Irapuato westward to Guadalajara passed through a rich valley covered with wheat. Its floor was level for the whole distance and it was walled with mountains of frosted silver. The Pacific Ocean lies more than two hundred miles farther west, and the country between is broken and rough. Building the railroads that run north and south along the plateau of Mexico was easy compared to getting the lines down through the great mountains and deep canyons between the heights and the ocean.

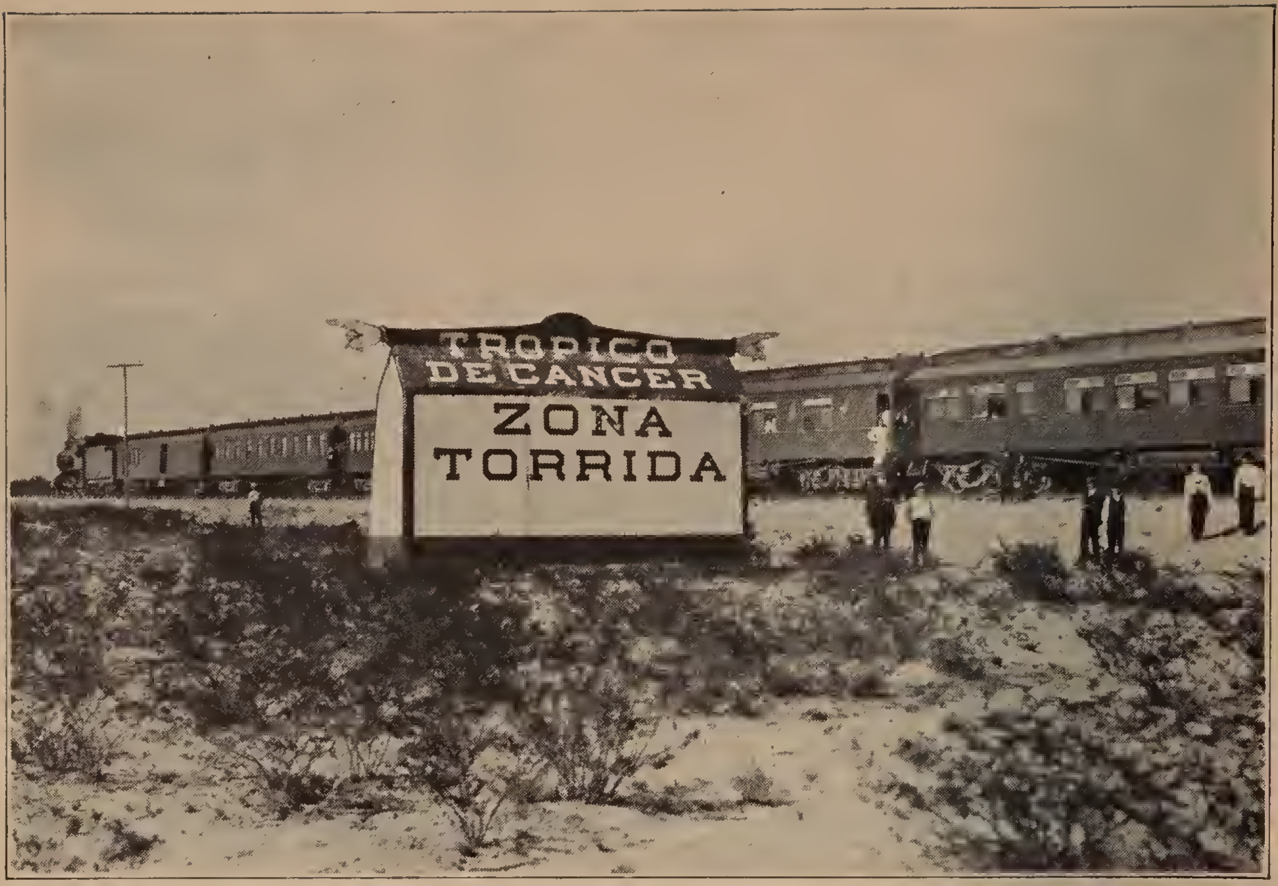
I enjoyed the trip but feel as though I had been on a cut-rate excursion. The second-class cars are of the cheapest description, and as a rule are patronized only by the Indians and the peons. The passengers sit facing each other on benches built under the windows, like those on some of our street cars, or back to back on a bench through the middle. The seats have neither cushions nor rests for the arms.

The car I rode in to-day was packed full of men, women, and children, ranging in colour from white to a dark copper, with the Indian type predominating. Most of the men were clad in cotton and wore sombreros and serapes. The women were without hats, but they had dark blue *rebosos* over their heads. Some climbed aboard with their babies slung in these scarfs, and some carried their lunches and bundles in them. All wore sandals of sole-leather tied to their bare feet with thongs. None had such a thing as a suitcase or a handbag, but all were burdened with numerous baskets and bundles, to which they kept adding as our train went along. At every stop they patronized the peddlers who swarmed at the stations, buying fruit, flowers, tobacco, sugar-cane, candy, and toys. There was no separate smoking compartment, and both men and women smoked freely together,

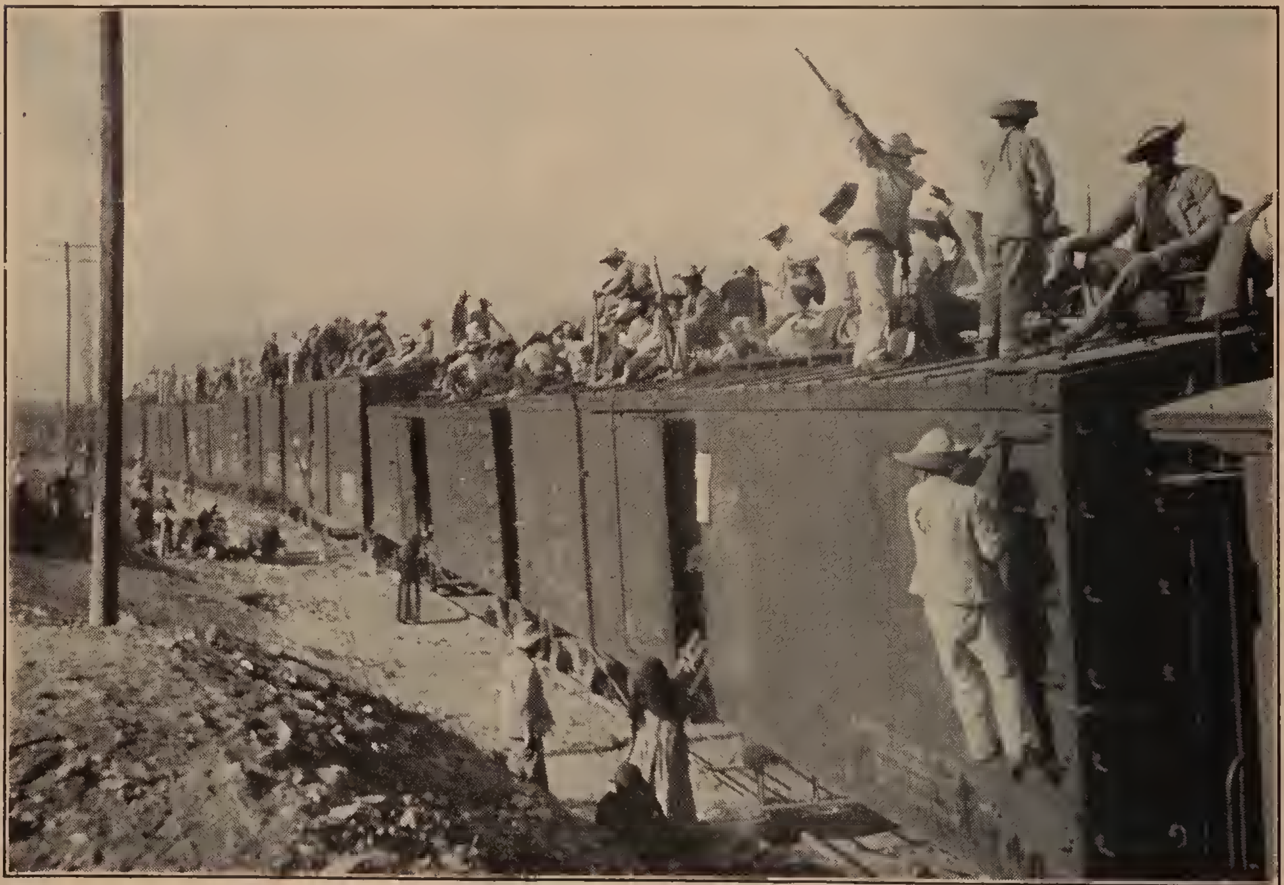
The peon, I find, is much like myself: whenever he gets a few dollars ahead he loves to spend it in travel. Sometimes he will take the whole family along and they will ride as far in one direction as his money will go, and then walk all the way back. He often makes a trip of hundreds of miles to visit some religious shrine, of which there are many in Mexico. The railways do a great business in excursions, not only to the holy places and celebrations of saints' days, but also to cock fights and bull fights, horse races and airplane exhibitions. Second-class fares are on the average about half those charged first-class travellers, and the rates are even lower for the popular excursions. About seventy-five per cent. of the passenger revenues comes, I am told, from the second-class business.

The best trains in Mexico have dining cars in which one can have meals much the same as on our trains at home. I had to get off for my dinner to-day, and I ate with the first-class passengers during our stop at La Barca. The food was served in Mexican style. The soup was brought around in a bowl and each guest was expected to help himself with a ladle. After this the plates were changed

Every railroad station swarms with loafers and peddlers. The latter do a good business in cooked foods, fruit, and candy, for to the peon buying things to eat is one of the chief joys of a journey.



"Through trains on the main lines of Mexico's government railways have Pullman sleepers. The roads are well built; indeed, I did not feel so much as a jar when we crossed the Tropic of Cancer."



When the army is on the move the box car is the Mexican soldiers' coach, sleeper, and dining car. The women camp-followers usually ride inside, while the men make the best of it on the roofs.

and we had rice and fried eggs, a common Mexican dish. We each took a spoonful of the steamed rice on our plates, put an egg on top of the rice, cut it to bits, and mixed the two together. After this there was another change of plates and we had beefsteak and potatoes, followed by roast beef, fried chicken, cucumbers, and the delicious black or red beans which form a part of every Mexican meal and are always served just before the dessert. Then we had a plain pudding and the meal ended with coffee and cigarettes, both men and women smoking at the tables. What I liked best was the fact that there was no hurry and no gulping down of the food, such as one sees at many of our public eating places.

Boarding the train after dinner, I watched the conductor as he collected the tickets and kept the people in some sort of order. He was an intelligent Mexican and seemed proud of his job. During my first trip to Mexico all the trains were run by Americans and for many years men from the States enjoyed a monopoly of the well-paid railway positions. This was because the bulk of the lines owed their existence to men, money, and equipment from the United States. Mexico got her railroads all of a sudden, so to speak, and none of her people knew how to build or operate them. Later it was realized that in the long run it would be better and more economical to train Mexicans for work on the railways so as to provide a permanent force at much lower pay than the Americans would accept.

Up to that time the Mexicans had furnished only track labour, but with the new policy they were given special training of every description. Boys of fourteen and over were signed up for four-year apprenticeships in the railroad shops. Native telegraphers were made train dispatchers and native firemen were promoted to engineers, while the best of the carpenters, mechanics, and boilermakers were prepared for positions as foremen and shop superintendents. This system, suggested and worked out by American managers, produced excellent results, and the railways of the country have done more than anything else to create a body of skilled industrial workers and build up the middle class that Mexico needs.

As a result of politics and the revolutionary disturbances, the Mexicanization of the railroads was carried somewhat further than was originally intended. During the régime of President Madero all the remaining American conductors and other trainmen were discharged. Soon afterward the American managers were removed and all the roads were taken over by the government as a war measure.

I find the railways well managed and the main lines giving good service. Nearly all the track is of standard gauge, and Pullman cars are operated on the through routes. In normal times one may board a sleeper at St. Louis and ride, without change, to Mexico City, and there are equally good accommodations to the other cities of the Republic.

For some years Mexico had more and better railroads than any other country of Latin America. When Porfirio Diaz first came into power there were only four hundred and fifteen miles of track in operation, and most of the roads were built during his long term as president. Thirty-four years later, when he resigned, the mileage had increased to more than fifteen thousand, while in ten years his successors added hardly one thousand miles of new lines. To-day Mexico has more miles of railway than have Italy and Belgium combined, and more than half as many as Australia.

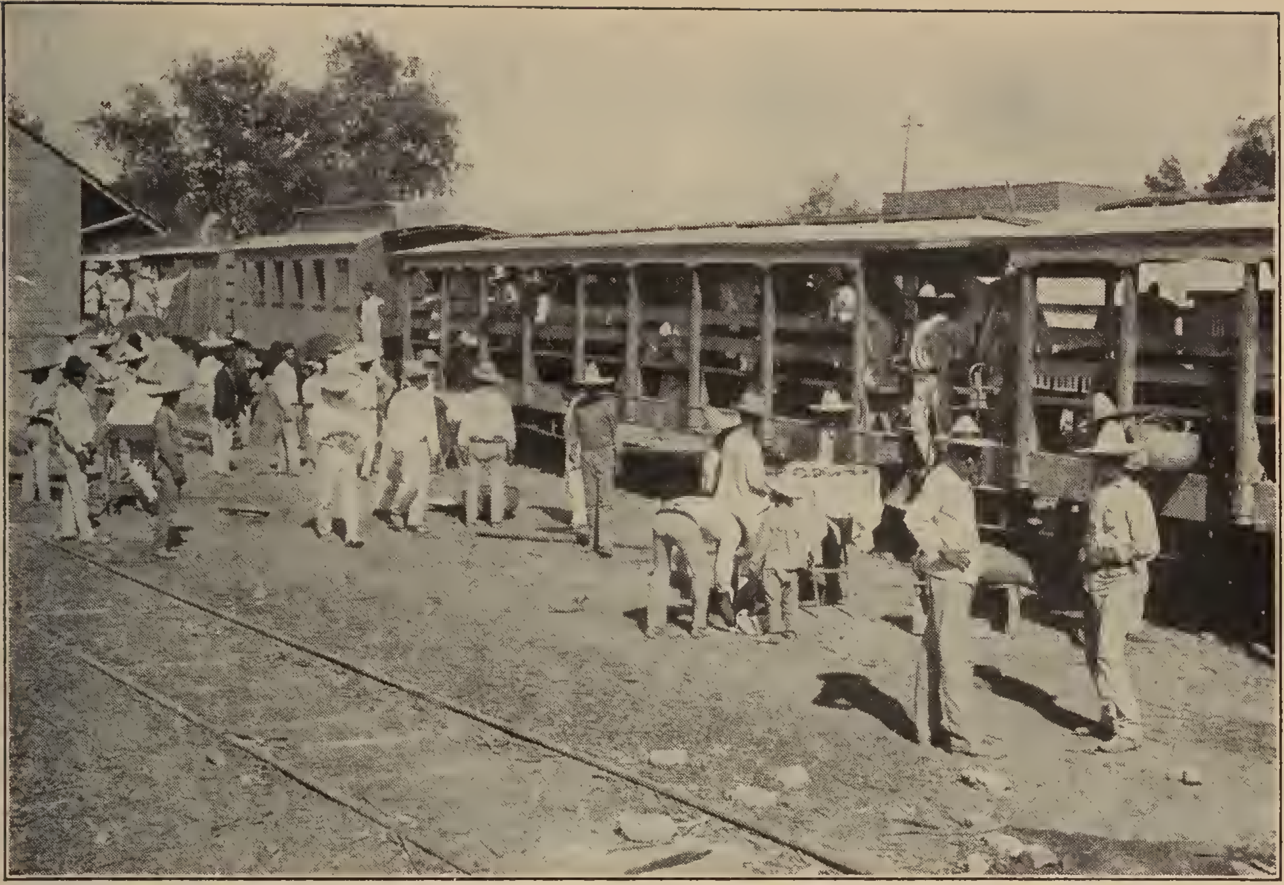
It is estimated that the cost of Mexico's railways has exceeded half a billion gold dollars. About seventy per cent. of them were built by Americans, fifteen per cent. by the English, and the rest by other foreigners or by the Mexicans themselves. All those constructed under Diaz were built on the concession system, whereby corporations were given the privilege of building specified lines. In return for subsidies averaging from three to five thousand dollars for each mile of track laid, the government wrote into the contracts various provisions giving itself special advantages. All the lines were required to carry public officials at half fare, and to furnish trains for moving troops or government freight at fifty per cent. of the regular rates. In addition, the government got the use of the railroad telegraph lines at just half what the public paid, and it reserved the right to take over the lines in time of emergency.

It was an American, a schoolmaster from Boston named Kelly, who made the first proposition for building a railroad in Mexico. That was in 1833, but it was twenty years later before a train was run over the railroad then extending less than ten miles inland from Vera Cruz. This was the beginning of what is now one of the best lines in the country, the Mexican Railway from Vera Cruz to the capital. Through service was inaugurated in 1873. This road was built by the British, who still own and operate it. The company received something like twelve million dollars in subsidies, while it spent thirty million dollars, or about one hundred thousand dollars for every one of its three hundred miles of track.

The Indian porters who had a monopoly on the carrying business between the seacoast and the capital made a great protest against the building of the Mexican Railway, and in order to conciliate them the ends of the line were built first, and then joined in the middle. All the material was imported from England, and it cost as much as five dollars to carry a single rail by wagon from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. For twenty years after the line was opened it had no competition, and at one time it charged seventy-six dollars for hauling a ton of freight three hundred miles. Passenger fares were ten cents a mile.

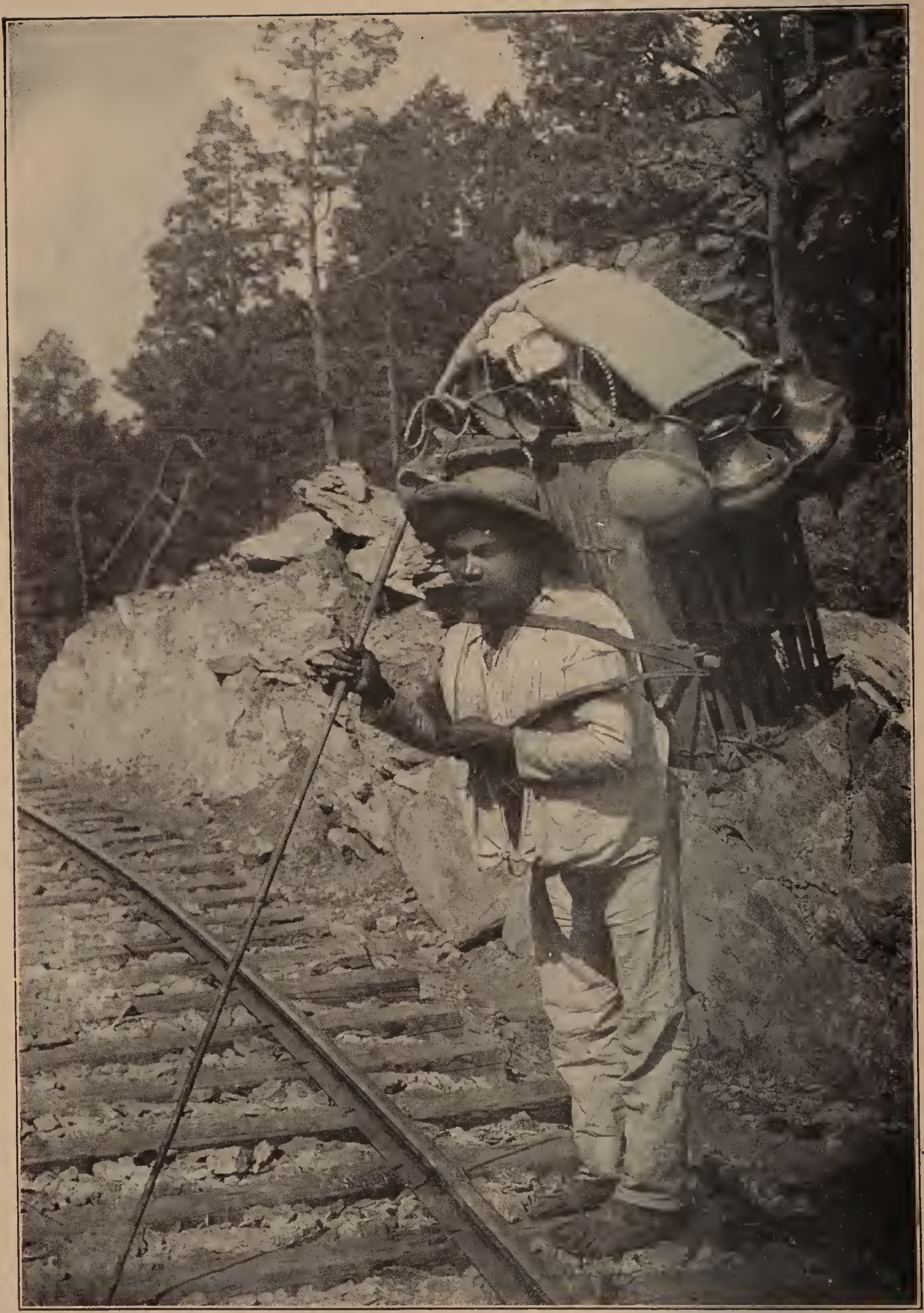
The road is a marvel of engineering and has some of the steepest grades known. To make the big pull over the mountains the British equipped the trains with double-headed twin engines, each with two fireboxes, two boilers, and two sets of driving wheels. The locomotives climb to an altitude of twenty-five hundred feet in twelve miles and ascend more than four thousand feet in less than thirty miles, lifting passengers out of the tropical lowlands to the heights of the Mexican plateau.

Though this British line has paid good dividends on its capitalization, most of the Mexican railroads failed to earn much until after the merger of the principal roads was formed by the government in the last years of the Diaz régime. Something like eight thousand miles were then brought together in one corporation, called the National Railways of Mexico, in which the government owns more than fifty per cent. of the common stock. It obtained the majority of the voting stock in return for guaranteeing the payment of the interest and principal on all the mortgage bonds included in the merger. Under similar



Bare board benches running lengthwise form the only seats in the second-class coaches, while the cars of the third-class are open on all sides to the weather and seem more fitted for live stock than for people.

The railroads running from the high table land of central Mexico down to the sea drop a mile or more through mountain passes and canyons which taxed to the utmost the engineering skill of the builders.



The peon potter often packs on his back the fruit of several weeks' work and peddles it for miles over the country. The whole lot may not be worth more than five or six dollars.

guarantee other lines were later added to the combination. The Mexican people thus acquired nominal control of their principal railroads by a total investment, exclusive of subsidies, of about nine million dollars, or only a fraction of their actual cost. Yet the real ownership remains with the holders of the preferred stock and bonds. Under the uncertain conditions of the last decade or so they might just as well have had their money in a hole in the ground so far as any return on their investment is concerned.

For six years after the merger the National Railways paid four per cent. dividends, but when in 1914 all the lines in the country were taken over by the government, payments ceased on both stocks and bonds. When peace was restored the lines not included in the National Railways were the first to be returned to their owners. The others were kept for nearly ten years, until an American committee of bankers negotiated an agreement for the payment of all Mexico's debts, then amounting to nearly three quarters of a billion dollars. Under this arrangement, the railroads were to be restored to the bondholders, while the Mexican government pledged the proceeds of its oil tax, its railroad revenues, and cash at the rate of from fifteen to twenty-five million dollars a year until its debts should be liquidated.

During the ten years of revolution the Mexicans did as they pleased with the railroads, with little regard to either the owners of the properties or the services rendered. Every commanding general made free use of as much track and rolling stock as he could get hold of. Many of the military leaders grew rich by selling transportation and charging exorbitant sums for the privilege of bringing goods in or shipping them out. Such an easy way of making money was not quickly abandoned, and even after peace was established the grafting continued. The merchants of Mexico, through their national associations, complained to President Obregon that the railroad employees' demands for bribes were a menace to business They declared that a shipper could not get cars until he had feed the local officials, that the cars would not be moved until the train crews were paid, and that to insure delivery of goods a man must be sent along to tip railway employees all the way to their destination.

Because of these and other conditions many of the largest American interests handled their own freight on trains provided and run by themselves. In such cases they were required by the government to pay the regular rates just the same, but they had the assurance that their shipments would not be sidetracked or looted by train thieves and bandits.

Railway men tell me that if the roads are properly managed they ought to yield a return, in spite of the damage done them during the revolutions and the graft and inefficiency that followed. The resources of the country are enormous and their continued development will make more freight for all the main lines. They say that the future of the railroads depends most on whether the people themselves can maintain a stabilized government and put a permanent end to the popular pastime of revolution and destruction.

Outside of the National Railways, the most important system in the country is the Southern Pacific of Mexico, which is owned by the United States Southern Pacific. A line from Nogales, Arizona, to Guaymas, on the west coast of Mexico, formed the nucleus of this system. This was long known as the Sonora Railroad, and was the first American line built in the Republic. As extended under the Southern Pacific, it now has nearly one thousand miles of track, and concessions to build several hundred miles more. It serves some of the great copper mines of northwestern Mexico, and with its branch lines and connections links the United States, the Pacific Coast, and the South.

When the line was built, the Mexican government insisted that the work begin at Guaymas, thus compelling the Americans to ship their steel rails and equipment around Cape Horn and up the coast of South and Central America. Other difficulties were connected with the labour supply, and Negroes were recruited in the States and brought down to the job Their sojourn is still talked of by the Mexicans in Guaymas, where they caused a reign of terror. One writer says of them:

> The Negroes were bad characters, and many of them had two names and a razor. When they distributed themselves among the natives on the night of a pay day, thoughtful men took refuge in cellars.

In the early days some of the Mexican railways were laid down on ties of mahogany and ebony. The chief objection to the ebony ties was that it was hard to drive in the iron spikes and almost impossible to get them out when the rails had to be changed. A large part of the old Mexican Central Railway is laid with wooden ties, which reminds me of a story told by one of the constructors. Said he:

"The average *hacendado* has queer ideas of business. I found a strip of forest, which might have supplied us with a goodly number of ties. I called upon the owner and asked him his prices for five thousand. He replied fifty cents each. I then said: 'But suppose I take fifty thousand ties.'

" 'Oh,' replied the man, 'in that case I could not let you have them for less than seventy-five cents.'

"'And if I want one hundred thousand?'

"'One hundred thousand ties!' exclaimed the farmer, raising his hands. 'I doubt whether I could get them out. It would be a great deal of trouble. I could not think of undertaking to supply that number for less than $1.50.'"

Chapala, which is seventy miles long and twenty miles wide, is the largest of the Mexican lakes. Ribera Castellanos, sometimes called the Riviera of Mexico, is the most popular lake-shore resort.

The horseshoe falls of Juanacatlan measure more than five hundred feet from tip to tip and the water plunges down seventy feet. The falls furnish light for Guadalajara and power for its cotton and starch factories.

The Lake Chapala Indians are directly descended from a people who most stubbornly resisted the Spaniards and played leading parts in the War of Independence. They are to-day scornful of the white man and the luxuries of civilization.

CHAPTER IX

GUADALAJARA, THE ATHENS OF MEXICO

GUADALAJARA is the art centre of Mexico and for generations has been one of the wealthiest and most cultured cities of the Republic. It is next in size to the capital and has fine streets, magnificent buildings, a great theatre, and an old cathedral that looks as if it belonged in some city of Italy. It is the capital of Jalisco, a state containing some of the richest agricultural and mining regions of Mexico.

I find Guadalajara one of the most attractive places I have visited. Its people are better looking than those of any other part of the Republic, and both men and women have features that seem more Greek than Mexican. The women are tall, straight, and fine looking. In a walk in the plaza last night I met a dozen big-eyed girls who would be belles in either New York or Washington. In the markets I have seen faces that are both refined and beautiful, and under the stone portales are women peddlers who would make good artists' models.

Many of the women here have brown or even light hair instead of the shiny black of other Mexican cities. The reason for this is that Jalisco was colonized by the Andalusians, the aristocracy of old Spain, and the Jaliscans claim that the pure strain has been carefully preserved. The women of eastern Mexico have round, plump faces with noses inclined to thickness and somewhat sallow complexions. Their hair, as black as a tropical midnight, grows so luxuriantly that it falls to the waist. It is seldom tortured with curling irons, and since it has a good wash every week, it is fluffy and clean. They have pearly teeth, shapely necks, and the easy carriage of the Aztecs. Their eyes are beautiful; they are large, dark and liquid, and frank and honest withal.

Many blocks in the business part of Guadalajara have arcades upheld by stone columns and forming walkways along their whole length—passages like those of the rue de Rivoli in Paris. These portales are common in Mexican architecture and there are more of them at Guadalajara than in any city I have yet visited. They are usually filled with peddlers or petty merchants, while opening into them are the big stores.

The city has twenty different plazas, or public squares. The main plaza, upon which the government buildings face, is filled with trees and has many beautiful walks. In the centre is the pavilion where a fine military band plays good music several nights of the week.

In Mexico the altitude largely determines the climate, and that of Guadalajara, which is five thousand feet above the sea, is ideal. The average temperature is 70°. The trees are always green, flowers bloom the year round, and the birds never migrate to warmer climes. So dry and mild is the atmosphere that the city is becoming more and more of a health resort.

Though the town is an important manufacturing and railway centre, no coal smoke pollutes the air. The railroads of Mexico are equipped with oil-burning engines, and the factories here use electricity furnished by the falls of the Santiago River near by. This river is famous for its great gorge, five miles from the city. The canyon is three thousand feet deep and the air within it is much warmer than that around its rim. It has indeed a tropical climate, and bananas, cocoanuts, and other such fruits are growing near the bottom, while the surrounding country has only the products of the temperate zone.

The Santiago River flows out of the beautiful Lake Chapala, which is seventy miles long and twenty miles wide, and by far the largest of the Mexican lakes. It has one of the most popular of lake-shore resorts, Ribera Castellanos, sometimes called the Riviera of Mexico. The marshes of the lake furnish the winter refuge for thousands of birds, some of which, like the snow-goose, come from as far north as Labrador. The lake is shallow and violent storms blow up quickly. The Indian fishermen always stop at the twin-steepled church in the village of Chapala and pray to Saint Peter for a heavy catch and a safe return home.

A striking thing about Guadalajara is the absence of beggars. In other cities in Mexico they have swarmed around me, but here they are rare. One explanation may be the absence of *pulque,* the Mexican beer. The maguey cactus from which this drink is made does not grow in the state of Jalisco, and *pulque* will not stand shipping this far from its source. Therefore one sees here but few of the saloons so numerous in other plateau cities and drunkenness is at its lowest ebb. This city has also the distinction of having streets paved with gold. Some years ago, when the new pavements were laid, the asphalt was mixed with the tailings from an old mine, and later the manager of the paving company, to satisfy his curiosity, had these tailings assayed. He found they contained about fifteen dollars' worth of gold to the ton and that six thousand dollars' worth of the precious metal had been laid in the streets!

Yesterday I visited the palace and stood in the audience chamber where the governors of Jalisco have long presided with more pomp than our president ever assumes. The building covers a whole square and it is far more beautiful than the National Palace at Mexico City. It has a whispering gallery quite as remarkable as that in our Capitol at Washington.

Next I went to the Cathedral, the cornerstone of which was laid three and a half centuries ago. Its most precious possession is the original Murillo painting, "The Assumption of the Virgin." During the Carranza revolution the soldiers used the Cathedral for stabling their horses, but before the troops took over the church this enormously valuable picture was hidden and for years was not shown to any one. When Maximilian was in Mexico, the French tried to send the Murillo to France, and after this effort failed Napoleon III offered to buy it for forty thousand dollars. When this was rejected attempts were made to steal the picture, and for ten years it was hidden in a secret niche in the wall. Since then ten times as much money has been offered and refused for this art treasure.

The Cathedral has been almost destroyed in the past and it may be damaged again by the earthquakes so common in this vicinity. The dome was once shattered by lightning and for a long time after that, whenever they saw a thunderstorm coming up, the people rang the bells to ward off the lightning. But this precaution did not prove effective and lightning rods were installed. The two tall towers are illuminated by electricity.

Guadalajara is noted for its pottery, the finest made anywhere in the country. The painted water-jars of drab clay are sold by curio dealers all over Mexico. The clay is so porous that the water seeps through to the outside of the jar, where its rapid evaporation cools the container and the water inside it. The jars are made in little shops with one or two workmen; most of them are situated out in the suburbs.

I took a car and went out to San Pedro, the chief village of the pottery makers. The track is on a high ridge and we could see for miles on each side of it. The fields are walled with mud fences and covered with rich crops. We passed hundreds of peons carrying pottery into the city, and soon came into a low-lying town of two-story houses, the streets of which are paved with cobblestones. The cars deposited us at the market, but we wandered about for a long time before we could get any one to show us where they were making the pottery. Finally we found some rooms not more than six feet square in which jars and clay figures were being produced. One of these was a hut of sun-dried bricks, the shop of Panduro, the most noted potter of Mexico. He was sitting cross-legged on the floor, working a lump of black clay in his hands. Panduro can make your likeness as you sit before him, turning out a bust the size of your fist. I bought a piece or two of his workmanship and photographed him as he modelled.

It was on Sunday morning that I visited the pottery market in Guadalajara. Hundreds of peddlers, men and women, were squatting on the ground with all sorts of things made out of clay on sale before them. Some of the merchants sold nothing but toys, others had piles of the pots and dishes of red clay in which the Mexicans do their cooking, and others the finest of water-jars and clay figures of men and women. There were also jars as big as wash-boilers for the cooking of meat stews and soups. The pottery had been wrapped up in hay and brought in on the backs of donkeys or men. Many of the peddlers bring in their own wares on their backs, untie these loads, and sit down behind them ready to remain until the last piece is sold. I am told that potters work for weeks until they get a large stock. They then peddle their wares about over the country. The whole lot may not be worth more than five dollars, but they will spend many days and walk mile after mile until all their goods have been sold.

CHAPTER X

WINDOW COURTSHIPS AND MARRIAGE BARGAINS

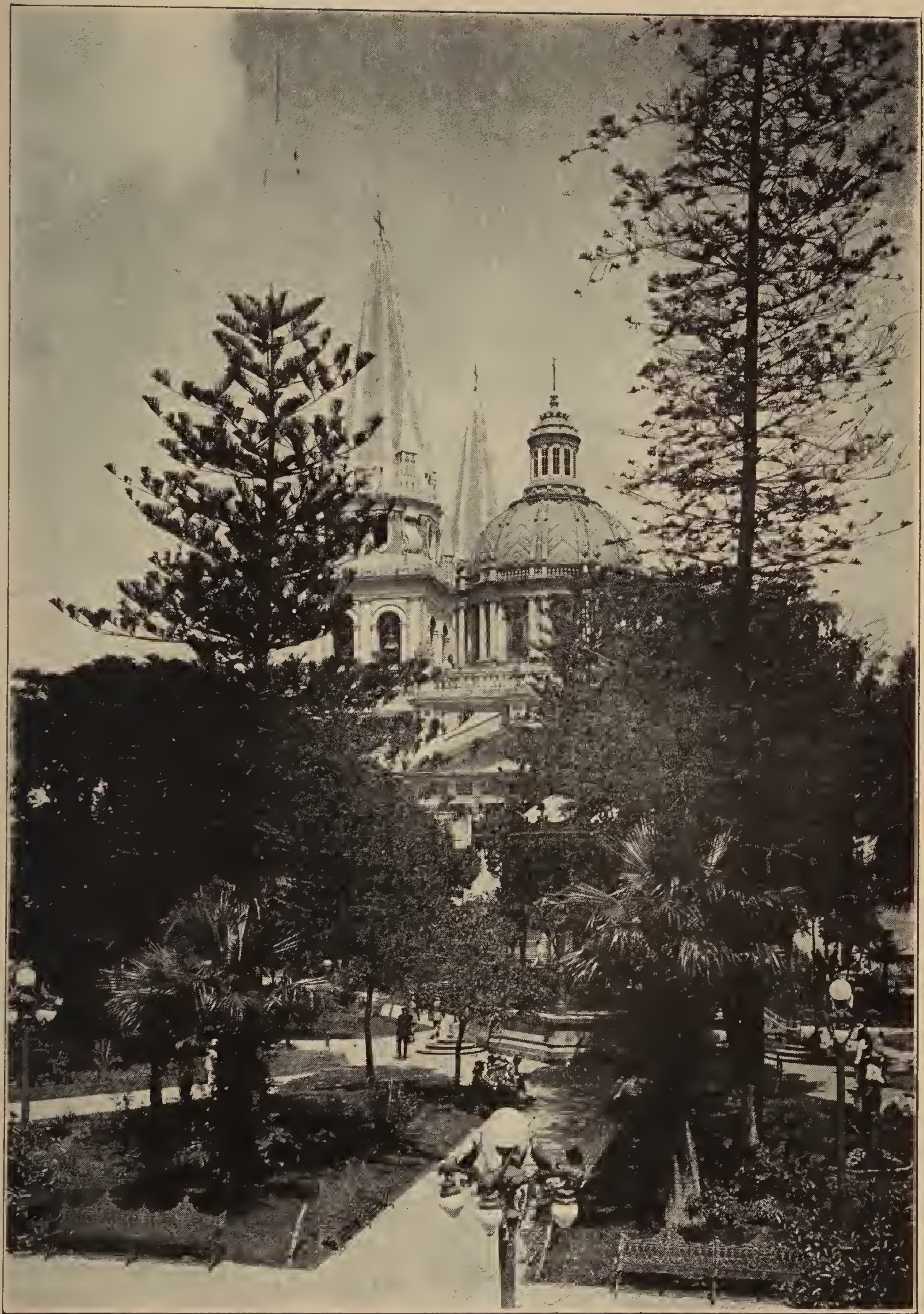
YESTERDAY afternoon I watched the first stages of Mexican courting and doubt not that some of the proceedings I witnessed will one day end in marriage. The young lovers were part of the throng that passed and repassed on the narrow quarter-mile stretch between the Cathedral and the plaza of Guadalajara. It was Sunday, and, according to the latest fashion, the beauties for whom the town is famous drove back and forth along this street for an hour or more. On the sidewalks and in other carriages and automobiles were many young men on the look-out to cast ardent glances at the *señoritas* of their choice and to receive signs of encouragement in return. Dressed in their light frocks and gay hats from Paris, the girls and the women nodded and smiled again and again to the friends they must have met at least fifty times in the hour's drive. But they did not seem to tire, and certainly I could see no reason why the men should grow bored with the procession; for the pretty women of Guadalajara are, I find, fully deserving of all the compliments that have been showered upon them.

It used to be that the upper-class men and maidens of Guadalajara promenaded in the plaza in the evenings, walking around and around to the music of the fine military band. Then the peons stood outside the inner circle of benches and watched the well-dressed men and women marching and countermarching inside. Now the plaza is given up to the peons and the Sunday afternoon drive is the thing for the fashionables.

In Mexico the young men and women do not mingle freely as is common with us, and the social customs are far different from ours. The girls of the best families are kept carefully secluded, and are rarely seen in public except in company with older women. Yet in other ways the Mexican courting allows liberties that our girls and their parents would consider objectionable.

Let us suppose that you are with me in Guadalajara, watching the Sunday afternoon procession. You have noticed a girl that seems to you beautiful. You would like to meet her, yet you do not know any one who can properly introduce you. But you can join the promenaders on the sidewalk, and each time her carriage passes it will not be improper for your eyes to court hers. You may follow her home and then send a present, asking her to accept it from one who has had the pleasure of seeing and admiring her charms. This gift may be a bouquet, a pot of flowers, or some pretty trinket. With it you must send your name and address, and at the same time fix an hour at which you will stroll past her window. If the present is accepted, a reply of thanks may be returned, to which will be added a wish for the welfare of the giver. Then comes the walk past the window, which is the beginning of "playing the bear," as it is called.

But suppose you get your first sight of the girl of your dreams at a ball. Here the ladies and gentlemen do not mingle except in dances. As you enter you see the ladies seated on one side of the ballroom while the men stand in groups round the doorways or stroll through the halls.



In the evenings when the band plays for the promenade in the plaza at Guadalajara, the scene is dominated by the spires of the Cathedral, which are brilliantly illuminated by rows of electric lights.

The peon does not consider himself really married unless the priest performs the ceremony. As the church charges a fee and the customary wedding feast is expensive, the Indian generally foregoes marriage formalities altogether.

When the music begins the gentlemen can select their partners without the formality of an introduction, so you can pick out your unknown "love at first sight" and ask her to dance. You may even tell her how much you admire her. If during the waltz you whisper sweet nothings into her pearly pink ear she will only cast down her eyes and modestly thank you for the compliments paid.

At the end of the dance you will lead her back to her seat, and if you have made a favourable impression she may let you have another dance later on. She is coy, however, about giving her name and address, but if she likes you she may suggest that if you are really in earnest you can easily find out. This means that you may follow her home and thus learn where she lives. After that the servants or others will probably give you her name. This being accomplished, the way to courtship is open.

I have seen a little of "playing the bear" during my travels in Central America, but here in Mexico it is still more common. It may be seen on any residential street at certain hours of the day or evening. The man is not allowed to call upon the girl and he cannot meet her alone. He has the right, however, to walk up and down the street in front of her house and to ogle her at a distance. He may even chat with her if she will as she sits on the balcony or behind a first-story window. The windows of most Mexican homes are barred, and these dear "little chickens" are kept, as it were, in iron cages.

When the Mexican youth "plays the bear" to the maid of his choice, the regulation procedure is as follows: We will take the lover who is as yet comparatively unknown. He may have sent his present and have intimated that he greatly admires the girl. She knows when he will come to walk in front of her window, but she may not appear. However, if he comes again and again at the same hour and she likes him she will finally come forth, and after that the visits may be continued from day to day. If she likes him not she may not appear at all, and after a week or so he may give up in despair.

Even when the man's suit is received favourably his courtship goes slowly. The first reward may be only a smile, the next a few words from the maiden, and later on a bunch of flowers or some little present of her own needlework may be dropped at his feet. He may serenade her, and at last she may beckon him to come closer under her window. If she likes novelty in wooing, she may have provided herself with a hand telephone, a lover's device that is sometimes used. Such a Juliet may stand on the balcony or behind the bars of her second-story front window, throw a combination receiver and transmitter to her Romeo, on the street below, and the two may whisper their love messages back and forth over the wire.

This playing the bear is expected to continue at the pleasure of the lady, and the bear is supposed to be on hand every day, rain or shine. If he comes only when the sun shines he is considered a fair-weather lover and is apt to find the blinds closed after the first heavy rain.

I have heard of cases where the bear act has gone on for years. In one instance a young man has kept it up for three years and he has not yet reached the conversational stage. The other day this beau was asked why he continued to play the bear when his sweetheart gave him so little encouragement. He replied: "Oh, I love her so dearly and she is so rich!"

All the time the family of the girl knows what is going on. They investigate the antecedents, character, and financial condition of the would-be fiancé, and when these are not satisfactory the daughter is forbidden to go to the window. If the young man proves acceptable the family still keeps track of the courtship, and after they conclude that he has pressed his suit long enough he is invited into the house. This means that the family approves of the match and it is practically an engagement. The man is then allowed to court openly, but when he comes to call he finds a number of the other members of the family present and still cannot see his sweetheart alone. She may perhaps come with him to the door, and thereby give him an opportunity to steal a good-night kiss, but as a rule all of his billing and cooing is done in the presence of Papa and Mamma, Grandma and Grandpa, and little devils in the shape of the younger brothers and sisters, whose saucer-like eyes never close during the lover's stay.

If he thinks to escape by taking his girl to a concert or theatre he learns that, according to custom, he must ask the mother and others of the family to go with them, and he is also expected to make presents to the parents, brothers, and sisters during the courtship. This makes his wooing very expensive, and he is anxious to hurry the wedding day, when he may have his love to himself.

Speaking of courting the whole family, I heard yesterday of how an American who married a Mexican wife successfully fought this matter to a finish. After he had become engaged he went for the first time to see his betrothed, and the whole family came in to make things agreeable. He sat and sat, hoping that they would leave, but they stayed with him to the end. It was the same way on his second visit, and at the third also he found everyone present. He then crooked his finger at the old man, and when the two had gone out into the hall, the American said that in the United States it was customary for engaged lovers to be allowed to be by themselves. He thought that if he was to be trusted with the girl after marriage he ought to be trusted with her before marriage, and said that if he could not see her alone he would stay away for good. The old gentleman was surprised but he consulted with the rest of the family, and then it was concluded to allow the courting to go on in the American way. After that, when this suitor called, the rest of the family got up and marched out single file, and when he got ready to leave, the old gentleman and the rest of them came in and bade him good-night.

In a Mexican marriage the groom has many expenses which in the United States are paid by the bride and her parents. He is expected to furnish the trousseau but he sometimes fixes the cost, informing the girl's mother how much she may spend. This being done, his mother-in-law-to-be does the shopping, picking out for the bride the gowns and lingerie needed, including even the shoes, stockings, and small toilet articles. She then sends the bill to the groom. The groom also gives the bride jewellery and other presents, among them an ivory-covered prayer book. He supplies the home and the furniture and often pays the civil and religious marriage expenses.

It is not uncommon among the rich for the bride to have a marriage settlement, and there are stories of beautiful and thrifty *señoritas* who have insisted on being made independent at the time of their marriage. There is one story of a girl whose suitor was a rich miner whom she had long held at a distance. Said she one day as he entered the house:

"*Señor*, behold this long staircase! At the upper end of it is my parlour. When you can walk up that staircase, placing a brick of solid silver on every step, you will receive my hand, but not sooner."

I am told the miner sent in the bricks.

After the courtship has progressed smoothly, the engagement has been announced, and the wedding day has been fixed, there are still a lot of difficulties to be overcome before one can get married in Mexico. If a man is from the United States he must have three ceremonies, two in Spanish and one more in either English or Spanish. He must give public notice of his intention to marry by having it posted up on the official bulletin boards for twenty days, and his marriage must take place before the civil authorities as well as before a priest. The three ceremonies consist of a contract of marriage, the civil marriage, and the church service. The contract and the civil marriage must be performed before a judge and four witnesses, one of whom may be the American consul. The ceremony of civil marriage is in Spanish and the contract gives the names, ages, families, and residences of both parties. The civil marriage has to take place before the church marriage and for the latter the priest is expected to publish the banns for five Sundays. All this costs money. Said an American to me the other day:

"It takes several weeks to get married in Mexico. You have to go to a half-dozen different officials and tell all about your own family, your father's family, and your grandfather's family, and you must give the same information as to your bride. You have also to fee the church, and as a rule it costs a pretty penny."

The regulations are very onerous to the lower classes. As a result many couples live together without the formality of marriage, notwithstanding the fact that the children of those who have not made a civil marriage are illegitimate. As a rule the Indians are satisfied with a church marriage, and would be wedded if they had the money to pay the fee. But often they cannot accumulate so much cash, and on some of the large haciendas the owners pay priests to come at certain times of the year and marry their peons wholesale.

The Indians are usually true to their wives, although they sometimes think they have the right to get rid of them or to trade old lamps for new as the spirit moves. I have heard of instances where men have come before justices of the peace and asked to have such exchanges legalized. In one case, after three months had elapsed, one of the parties returned, saying that he wanted his old wife back, but the man she had taken meanwhile refused to give her up, saying that he preferred to keep his part of the bargain. In another case, where a wife wanted to go away with another man, the justice said to the husband:

"Why don't you let her go? There are plenty more wives to be had."

It is no wonder that there are so many children born out of wedlock. A missionary in Zacatecas told me that sixty-five per cent. of the births in that district are illegitimate and that the percentage in all Mexico is undoubtedly as large.

This condition, however, does not prevail except with the common people. Among the higher classes divorces are far less usual than with us. The woman generally sticks to her husband, and he knows that it would be difficult to get a divorce, even if he so desired. The standards of these Mexicans are said to be considerably looser than ours and a fair proportion of both sexes have their sweethearts outside of their own families. Of course the majority of women are good in Mexico, as they are the world over; but their ideas of life and virtue are more like those of the French than like ours.

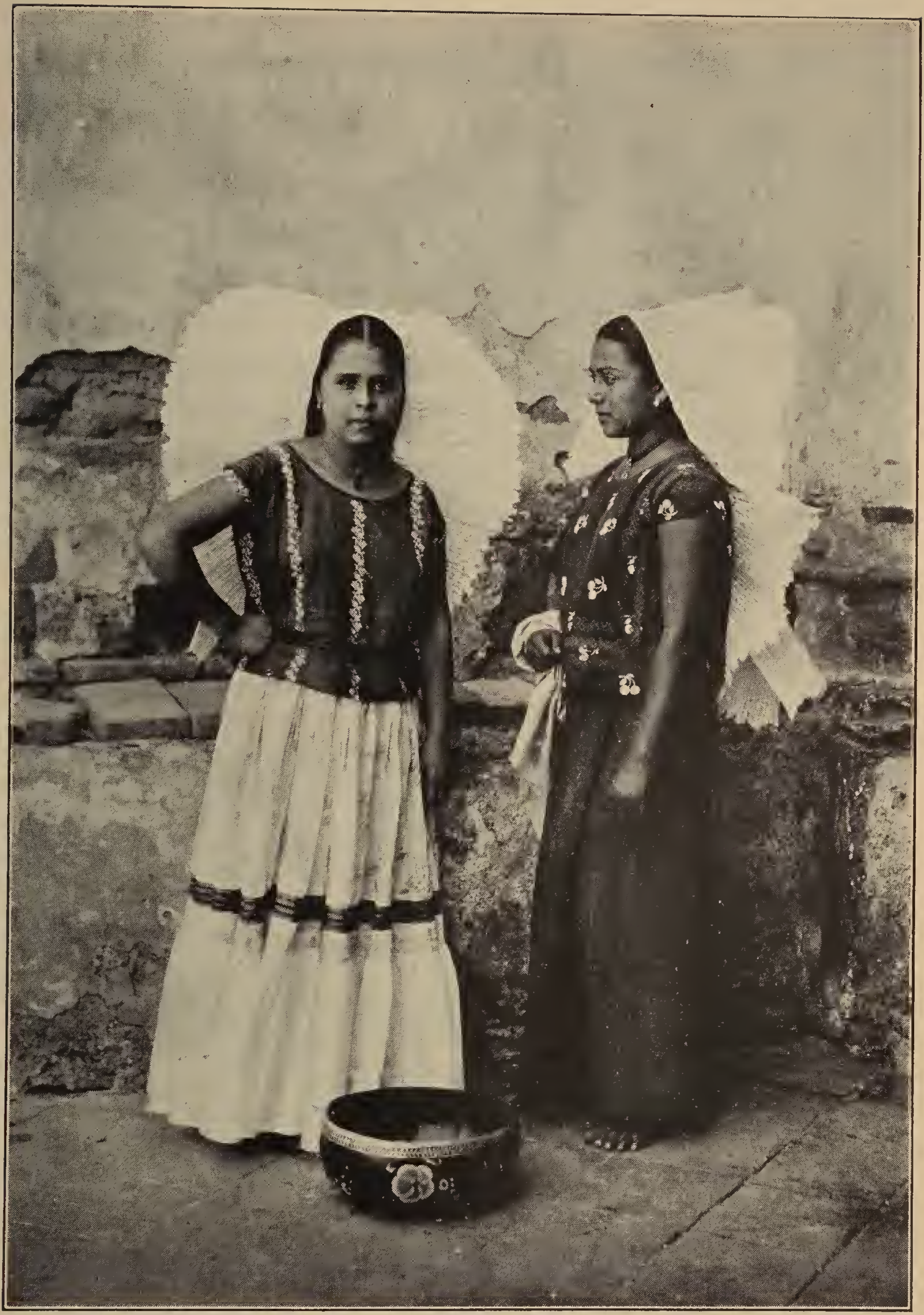
Americans who have Mexican wives tell me that they make good helpmates. They are economical and devoted to their children. The wife has the right to the absolute control of all the property she had before marriage, and also to one half the property accumulated after the marriage. Such property cannot be transferred except where her signature is added to that of her husband.

Other Mexican social customs besides those concerning courtship and marriage are very different from ours. At every railroad station at which I have stopped I have seen grown men rush into each other's arms while they hug most frantically and pat each other on the shoulder. I see women embracing and rubbing their cheeks one against the other. They throw kisses as they part, and they have a way of putting the forefinger and thumb to the lips and throwing a whole handful of kisses at once, which is very pretty when the girls are young and the lips are like ripe cherries.

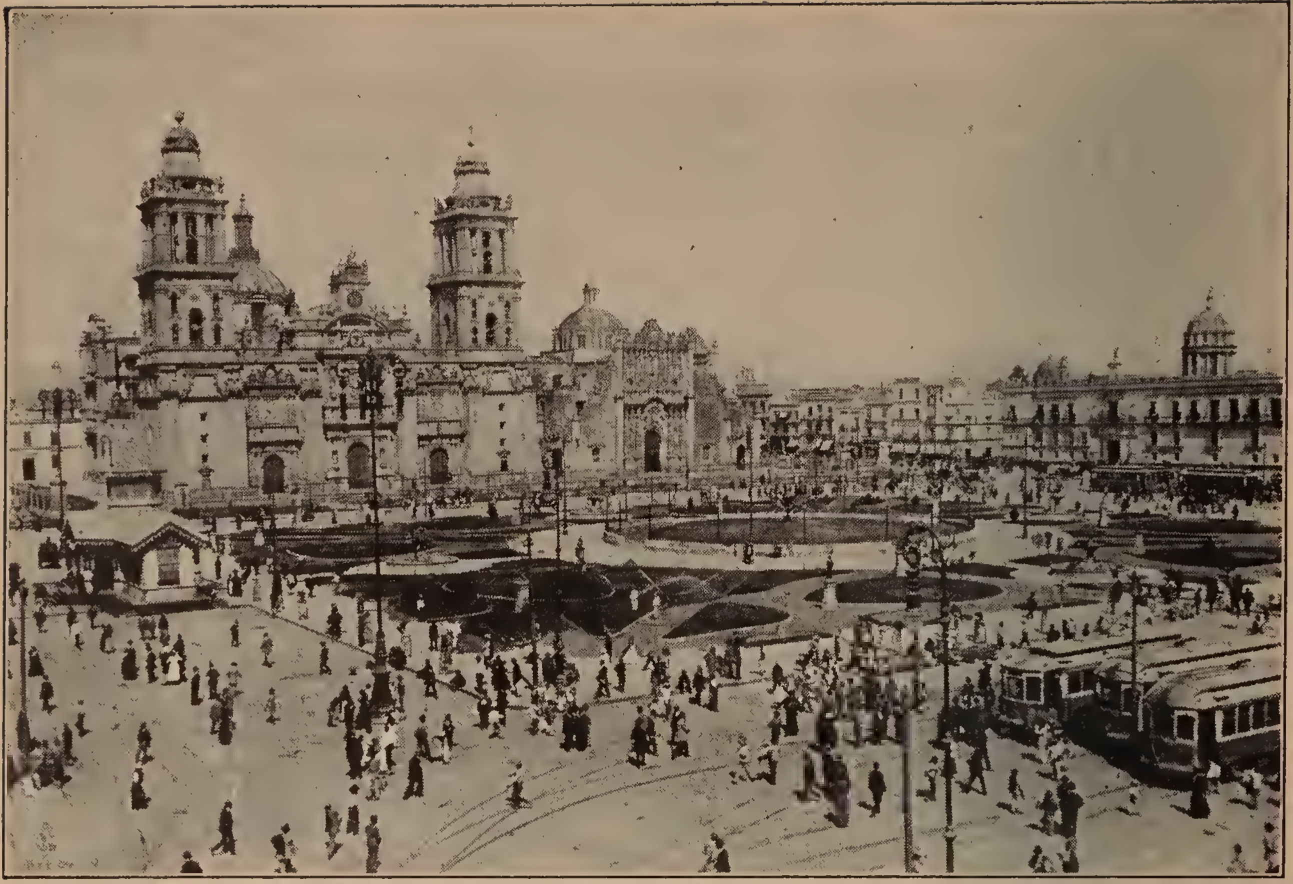
When a male visitor enters her home the Mexican lady does not rise to greet him. The strangers make the first call. The people drop their work the moment one comes in and load him down with polite expressions. They always refer to their house as yours, but the foreigner who takes literally this bit of extravagance is likely to find the results somewhat embarrassing. An invitation I received yesterday requested me to come to see a Mexican at "my house," at some street the name of which I had never heard before; but the owner would have been surprised if I had asked the transfer of the property. The Mexicans give but few dinner parties, and teas and luncheons are usually confined to the family and intimate friends.

The Mexican woman is fond of dress, but she wastes little time on her morning toilet. After a breakfast of a cup of chocolate and a roll she puts on a loose negligée and slippers and lolls about until the second breakfast, at noon. As a rule, she is not the best housekeeper in the world. She is by no means averse to paint and powder, both of which she plasters freely on her dark cheeks. She is proud of her hair, and especially vain of her hands and feet. The women have beautiful hands, soft, plump, and finely formed, but they ruin their feet by putting them into tight little shoes with heels in the middle of the sole, after the most approved Paris fashions. These shoes give them a mincing gait and I find there are few among them who can walk well.

Some of the more remote Indian tribes stick to their old customs of courtship and marriage. The Tarascan Indians believe in love charms, and they think the dried little finger of a dead man will scratch at the heart of the beloved one and make him devoted. Near Lake Patzcuaro the chief place of courtship is at the spring, where the lover watches for his sweetheart to come to get water. When she appears he catches hold of her shawl and refuses to let go until she says yes. He then smashes her jar of water so that the contents fall over her, and thereupon the



The Tehuantepec native women are superior to the men, whom they outnumber five to one, the males having been killed off in inter-racial wars. The *huipil* of white lace, frilled and starched, is worn on special occasions.



The plaza of the capital is the stage for much of Mexico's history. Here emperors have been crowned and overthrown, liberators proclaimed, Christian churches built on the ruins of pagan temples, Indians tortured, and heretics burned.

The Alameda is the Central Park of Mexico City, and the favorite resort of nurses, babies, and the always-tired. In the afternoon it is gay with music and the gowns of well-dressed women.

girl's friends give her a new jar in which she can carry some water home. The next day the man takes a load of wood to the door of his sweetheart, and if this is accepted the match is complete. She then comes to his house, and he gives her a bouquet of certain yellow flowers which are supposed to bring luck.

The Tehuana girls are among the beauties of the North American continent. They are as straight as a royal palm tree and their forms are beautifully rounded. They have olive skins, black hair and eyes, and teeth as white as lime freshly slaked. Their ordinary costume is a jacket and a skirt, the former having short sleeves and cut low at the neck so that it exposes beautiful shoulders and arms. The jacket reaches almost to the waist where a strip of bare skin usually shows between it and the skirt.

The skirt makes one think of that of the Burmans. It consists of a strip of red cloth several yards long. This is wrapped tightly around the hips and tucked in at the waist. In addition to this every woman has a *huipil* for Sunday and feast days. The *huipil* is a lace decoration of enormous size, worn as a sort of headdress. It incloses the face, or it may extend around the neck or hang down from the head at the back like the war plumes of a Comanche chief. On dress occasions the girls wear also full skirts, which are often heavily embroidered with lace.

The Tehuana women are thrifty and do much of the work. They are fond of gold jewellery, and a barefooted girl may sometimes be seen wearing a small fortune in gold double eagles.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPITAL CITY

IF PARIS is France, Mexico City is the centre of all things Mexican and here we shall see at its best the modern life of the Republic. The city itself is a wonder. Founded on a swamp, it is nevertheless the nearest to heaven of all the great capitals. It is more than a mile above the elevation of London, Berlin, Paris, or Washington, and it is hemmed in by lofty mountains which kiss the sky with their frosty lips some two or three miles higher up. Here among the mountains there is a little oval valley about fifty miles long and some forty miles wide, which is thought to be the floor of an ancient volcano. In it five lakes rise one above another, the waters of nearly all being higher than the spot on which the great capital stands.

Lake Texcoco, which is normally only two feet lower than the level of the city, has an area of eleven square miles, though in the days of Cortes it was of much greater extent. In the wet season its waters rise, and for centuries it was a menace to the health of the people living in the Valley of Mexico. One inundation lasted for five years and was not carried off until an earthquake came along and opened a crack in the earth which swallowed the flood. In coming into the city I passed a cut made by a Spanish engineer more than three hundred years ago as part of a great scheme for draining the lakes and the valley and carrying the water off into the Gulf of Mexico. A change of government occurred before the plans were executed and the work was abandoned. Nowadays, the valley is drained by a canal thirty miles long, with which Lake Texcoco is connected, so that it is no longer a danger to the population through inundation and pestilential fevers.

The Mexico of to-day is founded on the site of the capital of the Montezumas, and there was a town right here a hundred and fifty years before Columbus discovered America. The ancient capital was a city of islands and the mainland was cut up by canals crossed by numerous bridges. Many of its one hundred and twenty thousand houses were of red porous stone, though the poor undoubtedly lived in huts of rushes and mud. Cement-coated footpaths extended along the waterways.

After the Conquest the Spaniards levelled the city to the ground and started to lay out a new capital. They might easily have established themselves on the highlands near by, but chose instead to build on the same swampy site selected by the Aztecs before them. The city of the Montezumas was only twelve miles in circumference. The present-day city covers about twenty square miles, has a population of more than half a million and, including the Federal District, is more than twice the size of the city of Washington. The Federal District and the capital have the same relation to the Republic as Washington and the District of Columbia have to the United States.

But suppose we take a bird's-eye view of the Mexican capital. We can get it from one of the twin towers of the great Cathedral, the pivot around which the whole city moves. The Cathedral stands where once was the centre of the metropolis of the Montezumas. It is just above the site of the pyramid capped by the stone on which the Aztecs sacrificed their victims. There sixty thousand slaves were butchered in a single year. That pyramid rose within fifty feet of the top of the tower, and it was there that Cortes stood beside Montezuma and viewed the conquered city.

Taking a taxi from our hotel, we are soon at the Cathedral. We choose the east tower and enter the little door at its foot. We wind our way round and round through the darkness, up steps worn hollow by the feet of thousands, and at last come out high above the Mexican capital.

What a magnificent place for a city! We are in the heart of the Valley of Mexico and surrounded by mountains that make a series of natural fortifications. The mountains reach to the skies and those two great peaks off there at the south are covered with snow. They are Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl. "Old Popo" is considered the husband of the latter, which is everywhere known as "The White Woman." See how like a sleeping giantess she looks, as, carved in silver, she lies there outstretched upon the purple rocks sloping down to the plain. She rests on her back with face upturned, and we can see her mighty breasts and the whole outline of her gigantic body clear to the snowy feet, which are turned toward "Popo."

Now look at the valley. It is a garden spot, with its five silvery lakes sparkling like shields studded with diamonds. Do you wonder it was chosen as the place for the capital of the Aztec empire and as the site of the best of that old civilization?

Skirting the lakes, covering the valley, and coming close to the edge of the city are plains of richest green. Within them is the vast red and gray expanse of low buildings making up Mexico City. That huge structure to the south cost more than two million dollars. It is the penitentiary, the abiding place of many a rebel and the silent witness of bloody insurrections.

Off on the opposite side of the city we can see Chapultepec where Montezuma had his summer residence, and where the presidents of Mexico live. That wide avenue, shaded with trees and decorated with statues, which leads to it, is the Paseo de la Reforma, and the magnificent buildings about make up the *colonias*.

Now take your glass and look at the great checkerboard of Mexico City. Most of the streets cross each other at right angles, and the whole seems to be divided into square fields paved with brick. The centre of the network of squares is the plaza filled with green trees which lies at our feet. On our right is the long strip of forest where the fashionables of the capital ride and promenade every Sunday; there is music every afternoon the year round. In the business district there are no skyscrapers and only a few buildings rise higher than three or four stories. Hence there is not the jagged skyline of our American cities and we seem to be looking at a metropolis of the Old World rather than one of the New.

The roofs are all flat. There is not a chimney in sight and one can number the furnaces in those buildings on his fingers and toes. The Mexicans do all their heating and cooking with charcoal, or sometimes with wood, and a hot-water plant would be as great a wonder here as the Siamese twins or a five-legged calf.

The tops of the houses are almost level, save where an office building here and there rises higher, or where the many churches with their spires and towers stand in evidence of the days when this land was overrun by priests. Their roofs, like those of nearly all of the houses, are covered with bricks laid in lime mortar, and there is almost as much masonry in the roofs as in the walls.

The mighty cathedral from which we look down is the largest on the North American continent. Its roof covers acres and is paved with enough bricks, I venture, to form the roadways for a town of ten thousand people. The building cost nearly two millions and the tower where we are standing cost one hundred thousand dollars or more. Inside the Cathedral there was formerly a single statue of gold set with diamonds and valued at a million dollars. It was lighted by lamps that cost seventy thousand dollars. Even the altars were set with precious stones. Indeed, this was once a temple like those of Shah Jehan at Agra and Akbar at Delhi, and like them it has been despoiled by the plunderers.

Each of the two towers is used as a belfry and high up in the eastern one lives a family of bell-ringers. The largest of the bells, which weighs twenty-seven hundred pounds, cost more than ten thousand dollars. The clapper is eight feet long and weighs a quarter of a ton. At just about the time when our own Republic was born, the bell was brought to the foot of the tower and consecrated by the Archbishop of Mexico to the Virgin of Guadalupe. The workmen were more than a month getting it into place and it was three months before its sweet tones floated out over the city that once worshipped at the shrine of an Aztec god. On clear days the bell can be heard six miles away. The church has altogether forty bells, and when they ring at midday the peons take off their hats. Their sound serves also as the call to lunch, and the clerks then drop their work and rush for the streets cars to go home to eat and to rest.

The Cathedral is not only the biggest church on the continent but it is also the oldest. In 1525 a small church was erected upon the site of the great Aztec temple which Cortes had destroyed. Philip II of Spain got permission from the Pope to tear down the small church, and the first stone of the Cathedral was laid. But the difficulties of building on the marshy soil were so great that after fifty years the walls had risen only twenty feet above the ground. Then new plans were drawn and the undertaking was lavishly subsidized. The principal sacristy was finished three years after our Puritan forefathers landed at Plymouth, and in 1667 an inaugural service was held. The choir was not completed until sixty years later. So the huge structure was nearly two centuries in the building.

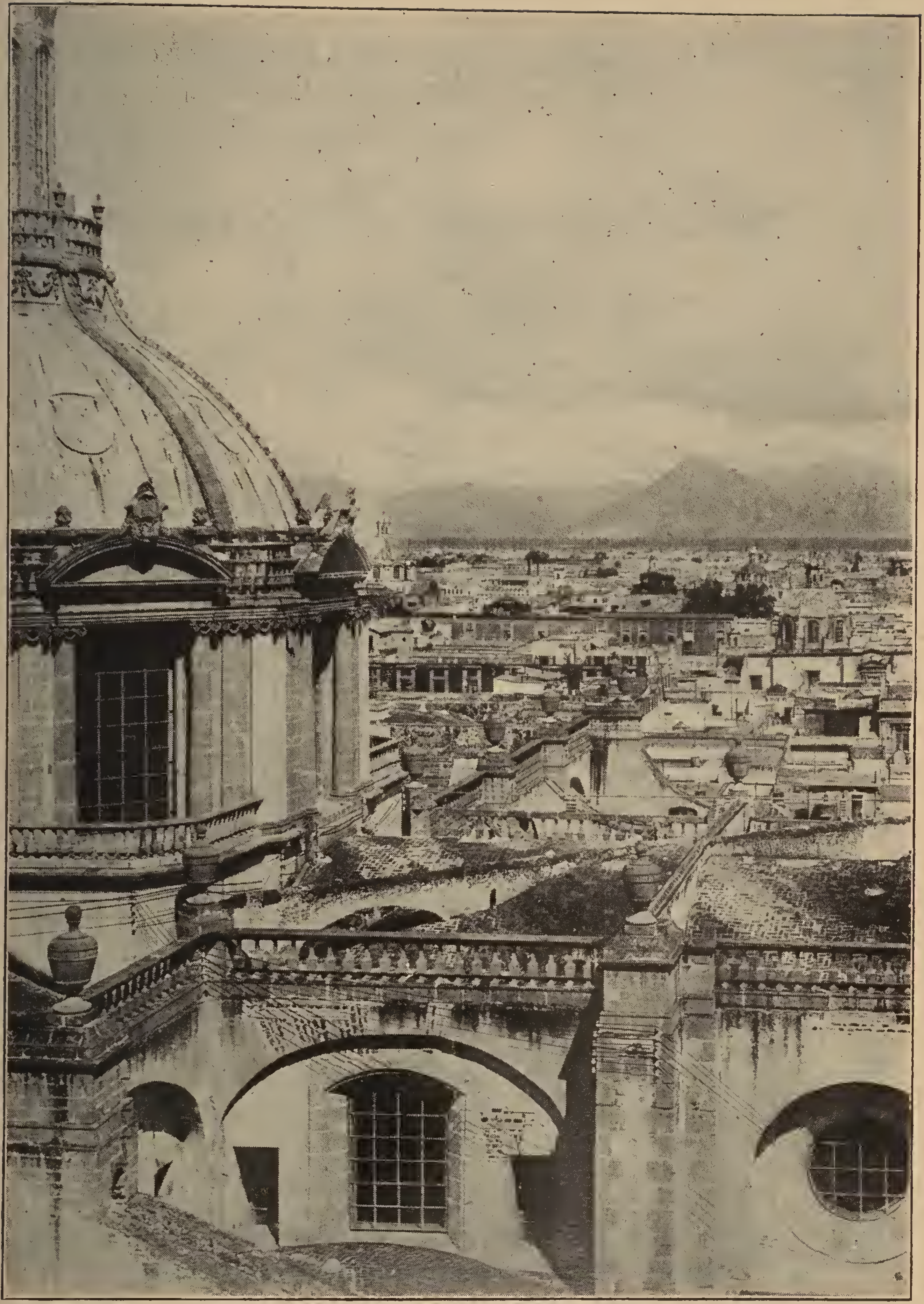
When the church was opened the richest of the Spaniards gave jewels worth two million dollars to decorate it. One wealthy mine owner presented a gold chalice, covered with gems and valued at three hundred thousand dollars. Later he lost all his money and begged that his gift be returned. It is said that he got back one hundred thousand dollars, but I doubt it.

Let us now go down from the tower and take a walk through the streets. As we come out of the Cathedral we find ourselves on the Plaza de la Constitución, a big square, faced by the National Palace, the City Hall, the government pawnshop, and other great buildings. It was here that the wandering Aztecs saw an eagle perched on a cactus and holding a serpent in his talons. An oracle had told them that they should take this as an indication of the site of their capital. This is the tradition back of the serpent and eagle on the Mexican coat of arms.

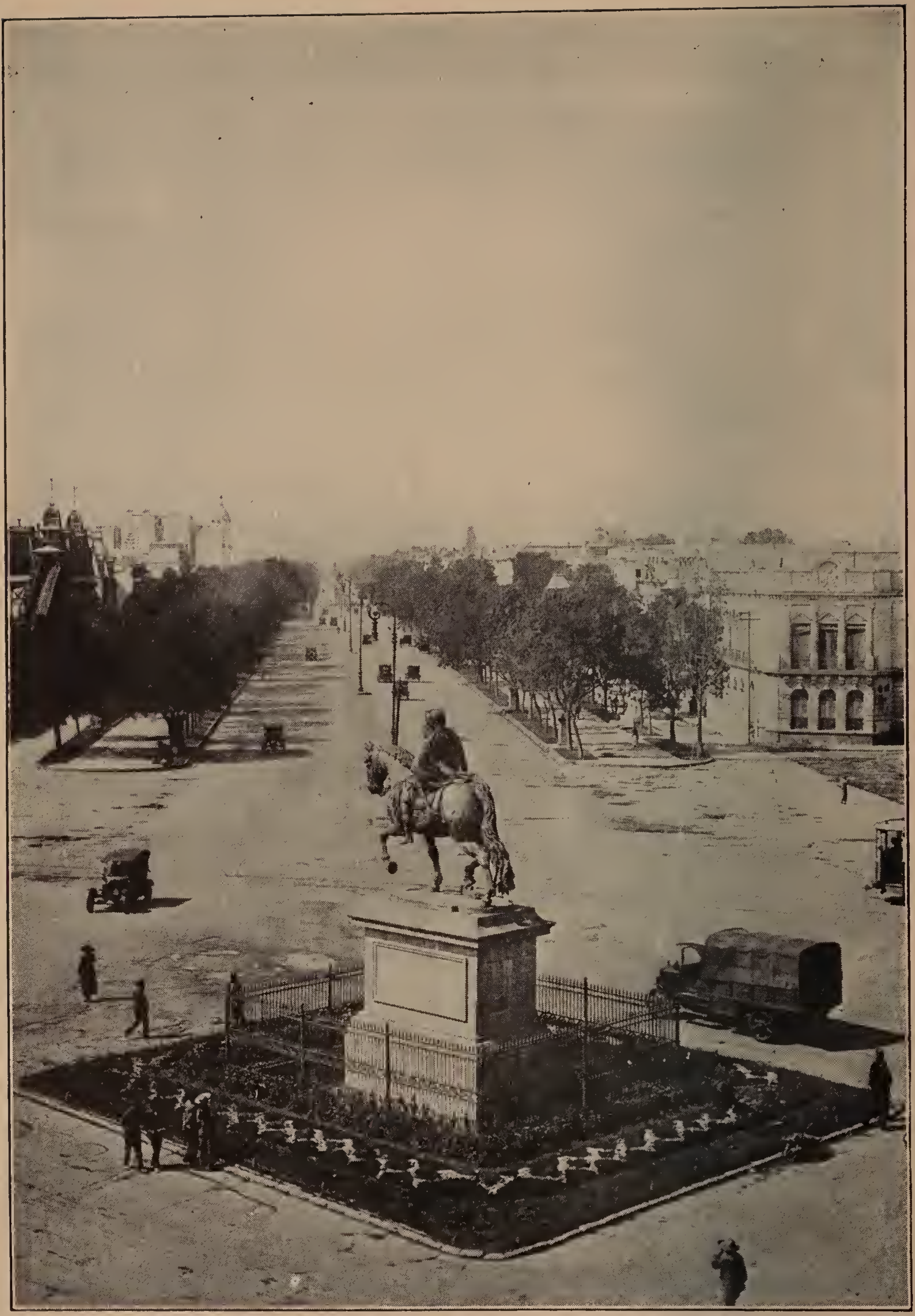
We cross the Plaza and go up the Avenida de Francisco I. Madero, called after the president of that name. The sun has now set and the electric lights have flashed out. The street blazes from end to end with the clustered arc lamps which are fastened to posts about fifteen feet high. The windows of the shops are also illumined and the asphalt shines like polished glass under the electric rays.

Now stop a moment and look at the crowd. Besides the many Americans there are representatives from many of the countries of Europe—Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Spaniards. We see American goods in the stores, and often hear the English language spoken as we walk through the streets. There are rich Mexicans, and some of those who have come in from the country are in the traditional costume of the old *hacendado*, consisting of an immense sombrero loaded with silver and a suit of rich cloth decorated with numerous buttons and braid. There are peon men wearing blankets over their shoulders and Indian women with black *rebosos* wrapped about their heads. There are girls of the lower classes clad in black, and women of the well-to-do families wearing high-heeled shoes and hats imported from Paris. Most of them have powder and paint upon their dark faces, but not more, I venture, than you might see any day in a walk on Fifth Avenue.

Our people at home still think of Mexico as a wild and dangerous land. When I started out I was warned that I took my life in my hands and that I would always be in



From the cathedral towers one may look out over the flat roofs and church domes of the capital to the silver lakes and green plains of the Valley of Mexico and the lofty mountain walls beyond.



In building the Paseo de la Reforma the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian and Carlotta his wife created as their monument one of the finest boulevards in any country. It extends through the western part of the capital to Chapultepec Park.

danger of the Mexican bandits and bullets. I replied that I would at any rate escape the American automobile, and that all the revolutions of Mexico could not equal the danger of crossing the street in New York or Chicago. I find that I have jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire. Mexico City swarms with automobiles and they go at such speed that their drivers would be arrested in any city or village in the United States. Here no speed limit whatever seems to be observed and even the taxicabs race each other on the chief business streets. Limousines spin along at fifty miles an hour over the asphalt of the Paseo de la Reforma, and in the Avenida de Francisco I. Madero, the Broadway and Fifth Avenue of this town, the motor cars almost jump over each other as they fly this way and that. The same is true of all kinds of traffic. The motor trucks make thirty miles an hour and there are hundreds of motorcycles which fly so fast that their wheels seem barely to touch the ground. Street cars go whizzing by. My heart beats as I try to make my way through the traffic, and its continual jumping has worn my throat to a frazzle.

I find the streets thronged with people and the stores filled with goods bearing price marks as high as those of the States. I observe new buildings going up on the outskirts and construction of one kind or other on the chief business streets. Just below the Alameda gleams the pure white marble of the National Theatre, which has already cost high into the millions and is perhaps the finest building of its kind on the whole North American continent, and on the Plaza de la República stands the Legislative Palace, which, when completed, will have cost something like six million dollars.

They tell a story here of how a Chinese envoy representing his country at the centenary of Mexican Independence was shown these two buildings. As he looked at the magnificent National Theatre he said: "It is beautiful, but what a pity not finished."

He was next shown the Legislative Palace and exclaimed: "Splendid, but what a shame not finished."

Finally he met President Diaz, then old and deaf. "A marvellous man," he said. "What a pity—finished."

When I was in Mexico City some years ago, the part of the capital lying on each side of the Paseo de la Reforma had just begun to be. The city was then only half the size it is now, and the greater part of this region was covered with swamps. Its possibilities were seen by American capitalists, who organized a syndicate called the American Colony Company and bought large tracts of land which they laid out in lots. They drained off the water and put in pavements and sewers. They built modern houses costing all the way from twenty-five thousand to one hundred thousand dollars apiece and sold them on long time. The project was exceedingly profitable and is said to have yielded one hundred per cent. on an outlay of about six million dollars.

This first district was known as the Colonia Juarez and now half a dozen such sections have sprung up in that region. One is the Colonia Roma, which represents an American investment of about four million dollars, while others were built by Mexican capitalists.

All of these enterprises paid well, and to-day the *colonias* form the finest parts of the Mexican capital. They extend all the way from the Alameda or a little beyond it to Chapultepec, and have covered a large part of the ground to the north and south of the Paseo de la Reforma.

In one *colonia* the streets are named after foreign cities and one can walk through Vienna, Liverpool, Berlin, or London. Another has streets named after famous Mexican statesmen, and another, near the Plaza de Toros, might be called the city of doctors, for every street bears a name with a "Dr." before it.

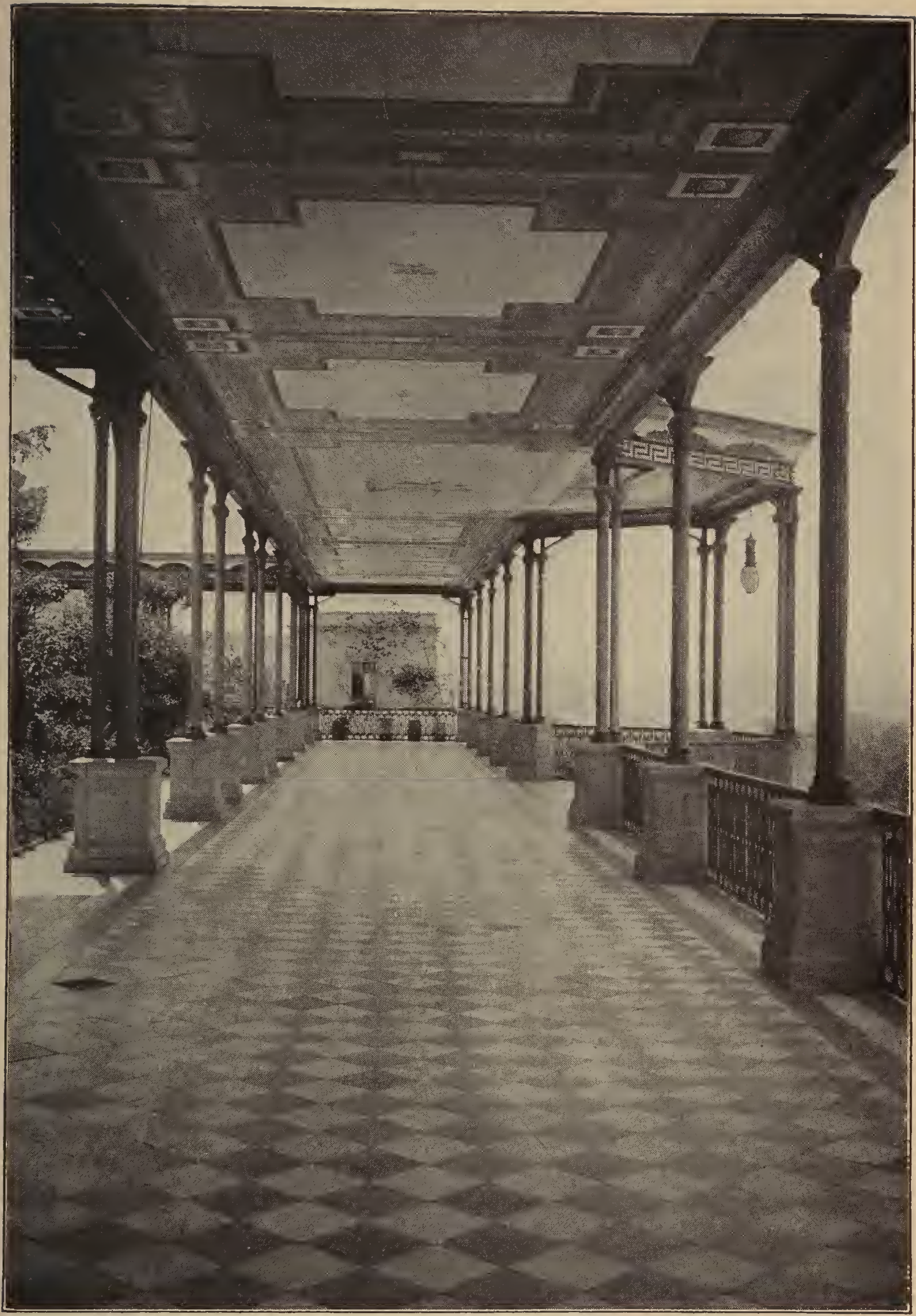
It is in this *colonia* section that our embassy is situated, and the American flag, afloat over the stone mansion, is to me one of the best sights of the Mexican capital.

CHAPTER XII

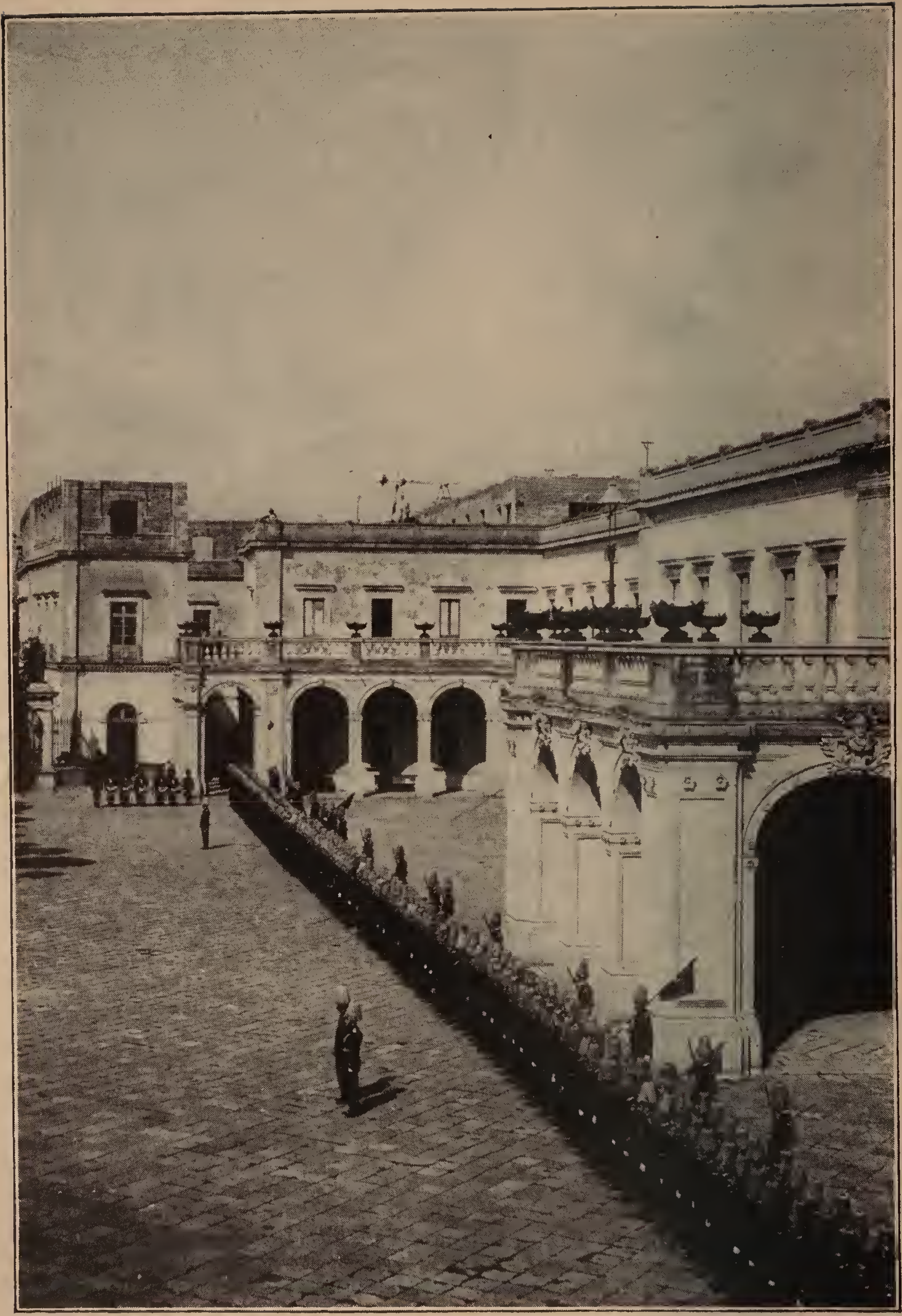
PALACES AND PRESIDENTS

JOIN me in my visits to-day to the National Palace and the Congress of Mexico. As our hotel is some distance from the Plaza Mayor we have to order a taxi, although in riding with these Mexican Jehus we feel that we take our lives in our hands. At least, by asking the clerk at the desk to get us a reliable chauffeur, we have made sure that we may not be driven off to the far limits of the city and robbed, as has happened more than once to the unwary stranger here.

Soon we are spinning along between the eucalyptus trees lining the Paseo de la Reforma, one of the finest thoroughfares of the world. We are going so fast that we have only a glimpse of its statues, its flower beds and lawns, its spacious grounds and beautiful houses. Now we have turned into the Avenida Juarez and are flying past the Alameda, a pretty little park bathed in sunshine and alive with people and colour, and almost before we know it we are at the National Palace, the official residence of the president of the Republic and one of the most imposing structures of Mexico City. It stands on the site where Montezuma held his court when Cortes came to see him and where Cortes lived after the death of the Aztec king. It was in this palace that many of the Spanish viceroys reigned, and here Maxi-



Chapultepec, which commands one of the world's finest views, still dominates Mexico City. The Aztecs built a temple and fortress there, which Montezuma converted into a luxurious palace. The castle is now the summer home of the Mexican presidents.



Most of the officers of the Mexican army are trained at the military school at Chapultepec, which is the West Point of Mexico. When we took the castle in the Mexican War, many of the cadets fell fighting in its defence there.

milian held his court for the brief period in which he played at being an emperor.

The building is several hundred years old and its architecture is of the ancient Spanish order. Imagine a low, gray, two-story building covering many acres. Let its walls be of gray stucco and let it have many courts within it, roofed only by the blue sky and paved with great blocks of stone. Some of these courts are so large that a cavalry troop could go through its evolutions in them. The entrance to the palace is by great doors, or gateways, faced with massive columns, before which soldiers in uniform stand and scrutinize carefully all who go in or pass out. We see more soldiers inside the courts and at every corner we meet a guard. From one of the largest of the courts marble stairs lead up to the offices of the secretary of foreign affairs and the audience rooms of the president. The foreign minister's rooms are furnished after the French style, with bright-coloured carpets, many pictures, and some statuary. The ante-room to the President's office is right next the parlours of Maximilian, and here we stop for a moment to see the crowd of office seekers and visitors.

Looking over the waiting throng, each of whom has some matter of one kind or other to present to the President, we observe a far greater mixture of classes and sharper contrasts in conditions of life than could be seen in a similar crowd at the White House. There are two score of gentlemen and ladies representing the rich. The men wear silk hats and frock coats and are as carefully dressed as if about to be received at the Court of St. James's. There are women in silks, wearing broad-brimmed feathered hats and decked with jewels galore.

There are people of the middle classes, substantial merchants in business suits and nice-looking women and girls modestly clad. On one sofa we see three ladies in black. One is sixty or more years of age. Next her is a buxom woman of thirty, while farther on sits a girl of sixteen. All of these have black shawls over their heads. Those two girls over there in black seem to be in deep mourning. There is not a bit of white to be seen on them anywhere except in the pale hue of their ivory skins and in the silver buckles on the high-heeled black slippers that peep out below their black skirts. There is no lace at the throat or the wrists, and their black hats are loaded with black ostrich feathers.

And then there are *hacendados*, or rich farmers, who have chosen to come in typical Mexican costumes. They wear tight trousers and roundabout jackets embroidered with gold and silver braid. The people of the lowest classes and even the peons also have their representatives here. There are at least a score of Indians in blankets, each of whom has a great sombrero resting on his knee or laid over his feet as he waits. The peasants are in their bare feet, except for the sandals out of which plainly show the bare, red, rough skin of the instep and their rosy ragged-nailed toes. Army officers, who by their showy uniforms must be major generals at least, pass in and out, while the President's aide, the last word in military smartness, speaks briefly to one caller after another, and ushers in and out those favoured with an audience.

Here it was that I once interviewed President Madero. Mexico was then on the verge of a new revolution, but the President thought his seat was secure. He told me that the country was entering an era of peace and that American property and life were safe, and he painted the future in roseate hues. It was several weeks before I was able to publish my report of this conversation, and in the meantime a new rebellion had broken out and the plots were formed that resulted in the assassination of Madero, the elevation of Huerta, and the beginning of the troubles between that country and ours which lasted throughout almost the whole of the administration of President Wilson. The words of Madero to me were printed verbatim and his enthusiastic predictions of peace and prosperity were being read all over the United States when the whole edifice of his administration had gone down as by an earthquake and he himself was lying in his coffin in the National Palace.

Leaving the president's offices, let us go on and take a look at the Congress of Mexico. There are two houses, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate holds its sessions in the National Palace and the Chamber of Deputies has its own hall in the business heart of the city.

First we stop a few moments in the Senate Chamber. There are two members from each of the states and the Federal District. They serve four years, must be at least thirty-five years old, and may not accept other paid Federal or state offices during their terms. There is nothing particularly interesting to keep us here, so we pass out and go over to the Chamber of Deputies. This structure is of stone with doors of wrought iron. Over it floats the national flag of the Republic, a tricolour of red, white, and green. The building is of the shape of the Roman Pantheon, the hall being a great circular room upheld by many columns and roofed by a dome. An enormous chandelier of cut glass, as big as a two-ton stack of hay, hangs from the centre of the dome, and its many frosted light bulbs make the hall as bright as day.

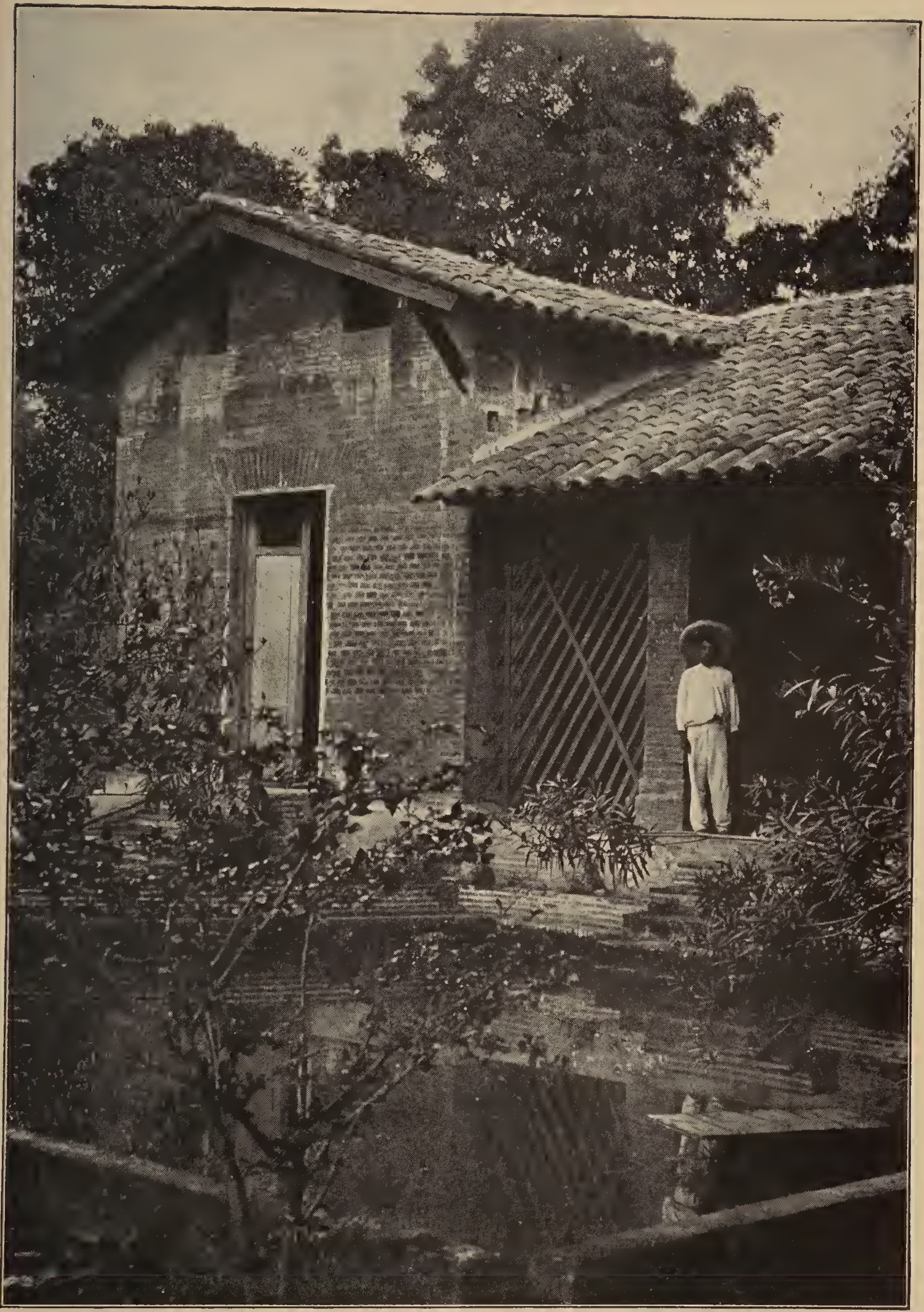
At the back, under the coat-of-arms of Mexico, the traditional eagle on the cactus, is the chair of the speaker. The other seats are in concentric rows, rising gradually from the floor below the speaker's desk to the back. Around the hall and looking down into it are galleries filled with spectators who listen to every word of the speeches and who seem to be much interested in the proceedings.

Each member has his own desk and chair, and the order in which the desks are kept is far better than that in the lower house of our Congress. The Mexican Solons seem more dignified than our Congressmen. They are more polite and there is less talking, whispering, and smoking while the debating goes on.

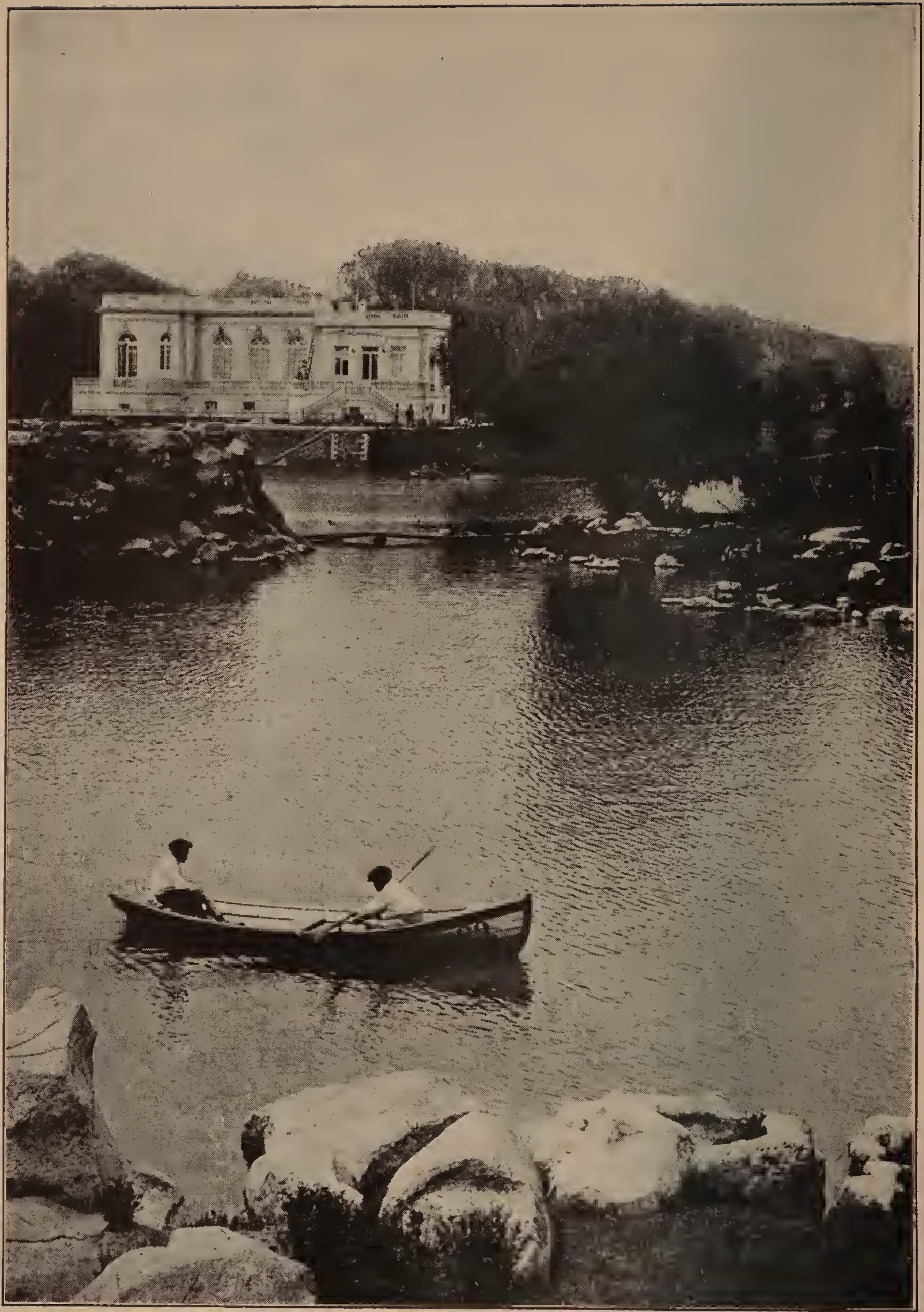
The chamber is much smaller than our House of Representatives. It has only two hundred and thirty-three members, elected for two years, in the proportion of one member for each sixty thousand inhabitants. Each state and territory has at least one deputy. The United States of Mexico consists of twenty-eight states, two territories, and the Federal District.

The Mexican Congress meets annually in two sessions. The first is from April 1st to May 31st, and the second is from September 16th to December 15th. A permanent committee of both houses sits during the recess.

Just as with us, there are three branches of the Mexican government—the legislative, consisting of Congress; the judicial, vested in the supreme court, and the executive, headed by the president. There is now no vice-president, the Mexicans having learned by experience that the



The Emperor Maximilian would sometimes leave his palace and his problems in Mexico City for the quiet of his little house at Cuernavaca, seventy-five miles away. The swimming pool is said to have been the delight of the Empress Carlotta.



Where Montezuma had his fishpond, his hunting-lodge, and his harem, where American soldiers battled in 1847, where hot-tempered aristocrats fought their duels, there is now Chapultepec Park, an outdoor beauty spot and playground.

existence of this office makes for trouble and tends to breed revolutions. The president holds most of the real power, and neither the court nor the Congress has the authority they have with us. More than one dictator-president has not only selected the judges and legislators, but even put them in prison for not doing his will. Indeed, although on paper Mexico has long been a democracy, for most of the period of its independence it has been ruled by powerful autocrats. In the first hundred years after the creation of the office of president there were sixty-six chief executives of one sort or another—acting, substitute, or provisional, with only an occasional incumbent who has been regularly elected. Their terms have ranged all the way from the thirty-odd years of Diaz's rule to that of Pedro Lascurain, who enjoyed the position for exactly forty-six minutes, from seven to seven forty-six of the evening of February 19, 1913.

Porfirio Diaz was the strongest of them all and did the most for the material development of his country. He was immensely popular with the mass of the people, and highly respected abroad as an able administrator. The life of this remarkable man reads like a romance. Born a poor boy in the backwoods state of Oaxaca, he fitted himself for the law, but when war broke out between Mexico and the United States he entered the army and fought for his country. After the war was over he remained in the army for some time and studied military science. He then went back to the law, but returned to the army in the revolution of '55, and from that time on was mixed up in successive revolutions until the time of his selection as president.

In the early days of his career he had many narrow escapes. Once he was obliged to flee to New Orleans. When he returned he took passage under an assumed name and stayed in his room pretending he was seasick. There were a number of Mexican officers on board, and he thought that they had discovered him. Knowing that his arrest meant death, he jumped overboard and started to swim to the shore, which was about ten miles away. He was seen and rescued, and the captain, thinking him a lunatic, handed him over to the purser. This man, though he knew he could make fifty thousand dollars by turning him over to the soldiers, refused to do so. He protected him while on board and smuggled him ashore as a coal heaver, and Diaz was soon back in his native state and with his army.

Once firmly established in power, Diaz scarcely bothered to pretend that his government was democratic or that his elections were constitutional. He was twice provisional president before he entered upon a regular term in 1877. From then until he resigned at the age of eighty he was reëlected eight times in thirty-four years. Under the present constitution, the Mexican president is elected for a four-year term and may not be reëlected.

For more than a generation Diaz controlled the country with an iron hand in which was held a two-edged sword. He was quick to cut off every head that rose above the common level, and he wiped out his enemies without regard for anything but the success of the administration. Diaz often said that he believed in much government and but little politics. The result was that political parties were practically extinguished during his long reign. However that may be, the fact remains that he established law and order to a degree unknown to

Mexico before his time and not equalled since. He raised his country to a place where it was respected by the nations of the earth, he stabilized public credit, and he wooed and won foreign capital for the development of the land's resources.

In 1910 the Mexican Republic celebrated the centennial of the beginning of the struggle for independence from Spanish rule. The elaborate ceremonies were in the nature of a personal triumph for President Diaz, and congratulations upon the peace and prosperity of his country were showered upon him by all the rulers of the world.

At night from the towers of the great cathedral in Mexico City there blazed in letters of fire the words: "Liberty," "Peace," "Progress," and the dates 1810 and 1910. At midnight of September 15th, in accordance with national custom, President Diaz stepped out on the balcony over the entrance to the Palace and stood beside the old Liberty Bell tolled by the parish priest Hidalgo a hundred years before to call the people to the war for freedom. As Diaz struck the bell the crowds below broke into great shouts of: "Viva Mexico!" "Viva Diaz!" "Viva Don Porfirio!"

That was the last great public appearance of Mexico's "Grand Old Man." The seeds of revolution had been sown. Francisco Madero, a clever little lawyer of Coahuila, himself a member of a great landowning family, had written a book called "The Presidential Succession." In this he attacked the whole autocratic Diaz régime and the group of Cientificos, or "scientific grafters," which surrounded him. He had much to say against the great landholders and the system that allowed the lands to remain in the hands of a few. Diaz's term expired in November, and when it was announced that he would run again for the presidency a storm of protest swept the country. It took only a few months of fighting to expose the real weakness of the government, and in the following May Diaz fled from Mexico and Madero took office as provisional president. Instead of the new era of reforms and progress Madero expected his success to inaugurate, it was the beginning of ten years of revolution and upheaval from which the country will be a long time recovering.

It was at Chapultepec, the summer palace of the presidents, that I had an interview with Porfirio Diaz who was then in the height of his power. The President was very free in speaking of his country and people and he impressed me as a man of great force. Dressed in plain business clothes, he was without ostentation, and at the close of the talk we walked together over the palace and took a drive through the grounds.

Chapultepec is one of the wonderful palaces of the world. Its park of a thousand acres is filled with splendid cypress trees, some of which are more than a hundred feet high and many of which are five or six hundred years old. Their trunks are of massive size and their gnarled limbs spread outward as they go up until they intertwine with other branches at the top to form a dense shade. They are clothed in perennial green and from them hang great beards of the beautiful silver Spanish moss, which one sees in the forests of Florida and Louisiana. Under these trees Montezuma is said to have held his court and here news came to him of the Spanish invasion. A drive through this park is like going through the forests of fairyland, and in the morning and the afternoon, when the sun casts long shadows through the trees and over the well-kept lawn, its sylvan beauties are beyond description.

In the centre of the park is a mighty rock, rising straight up for at least two hundred feet. On its summit is built the castle of Chapultepec, covering as much space as the Capitol at Washington. It rises in terraces of white marble along which are lovely flower gardens that make one think of the hanging gardens of the Aztec emperors.

The castle was finished by a Spanish viceroy just before our own United States was born, and here he lived with his beautiful vice-queen, who was noted as one of the first blondes ever seen in Mexico. The building later fell into decay, but was restored, and when Maximilian and Carlotta were here they did much to make it the imposing palace it is to-day. A good deal of the furniture was the gift of Napoleon III himself. The Blue Room is famed for some exquisite old furniture and for the blue-and-gold brocaded satin on its walls. The panels in the walls of the state dining room are covered with Gobelin tapestries. The President often receives distinguished visitors in the Hall of Ambassadors, which is decorated in pink and gold in the style of Louis XV. A luxurious suite with dainty bath is reserved for guests to whom the Republic wishes to do special honour. The only notable structural change since Maximilian's time is the bowling-alley installed by Madero. This is so arranged that it can be converted into a ballroom.

The view from this castle is one of the finest to be seen anywhere in the world. The whole of the Valley of Mexico is spread out before the visitor, and the capital, with its cathedral towers and tiled domes, lies at his feet. In the distance silvery lakes sparkle like floods of diamonds amid the green. Upon all sides the great mountains of Mexico gleam like hills of frosted silver, while away off under the sun one sees the white heads of the two great volcanoes, Popocatepetl and the White Woman, capped with perpetual snow.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MOUNTAIN OF CHARITY

HOW would you like to borrow money of Uncle Sam at one per cent. a month?

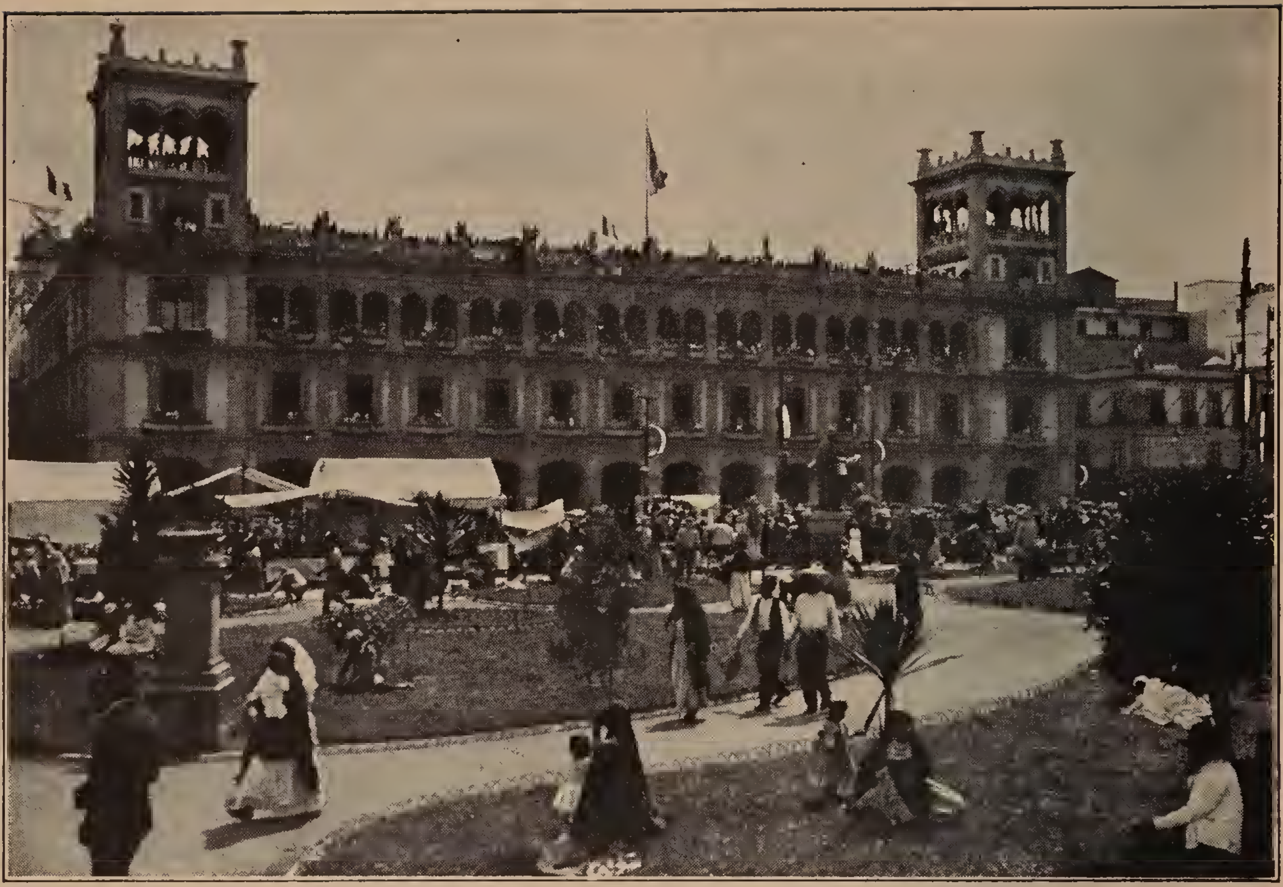
I do not mean in big, long-time loans, but in something like five, ten, or fifty dollar advances to tide you over till next pay day. That is what you can do in Mexico City. The government has a pawnshop in which you can put up your watch or your wedding ring, or even an oil stove or a porcelain bathtub. It is known as the Monte de Piedad, which means "mountain of charity," and stands right in the heart of the capital just opposite the Cathedral and within a stone's throw of the National Palace, on one of the corners of Cinco de Mayo Street and the great plaza. It is a big, three-story building which looks like a prison. On one corner of the roof is a cross, and the Mexican coat-of-arms is emblazoned over the portals. The building covers almost a block and is filled with everything that is pawnable under the Mexican sun. There are millions of dollars' worth of gold and silver stored away in its vaults, and in the sale cases to-day I saw a peck of gold ornaments and precious stones besides rings and bracelets galore.

I went through the various rooms, watching people of all ages and financial conditions and of both sexes borrowing money on articles of every description. I watched the selling and saw crowds looking over the stocks of various pledges to get bargains. In the loan rooms the people stood before long counters above which were wire networks like those of our bank cages, and in the great patio, or square, around which the rooms are built, I saw them bring in automobiles, steel safes, cradles, furniture, and pianos. I watched the unpacking of an upright piano. The owner was a pretty girl, dressed in black with a mantilla over her head, and the tears stood in her eyes as she looked on. In another part of the patio were a man and his wife getting a loan on their parlour carpet, which still showed the dust of recent wear, and away off in one corner lay a half-dozen old bathtubs, which had evidently been taken from once well-to-do houses and brought here as pledges. It may be they will be redeemed by Saturday night.

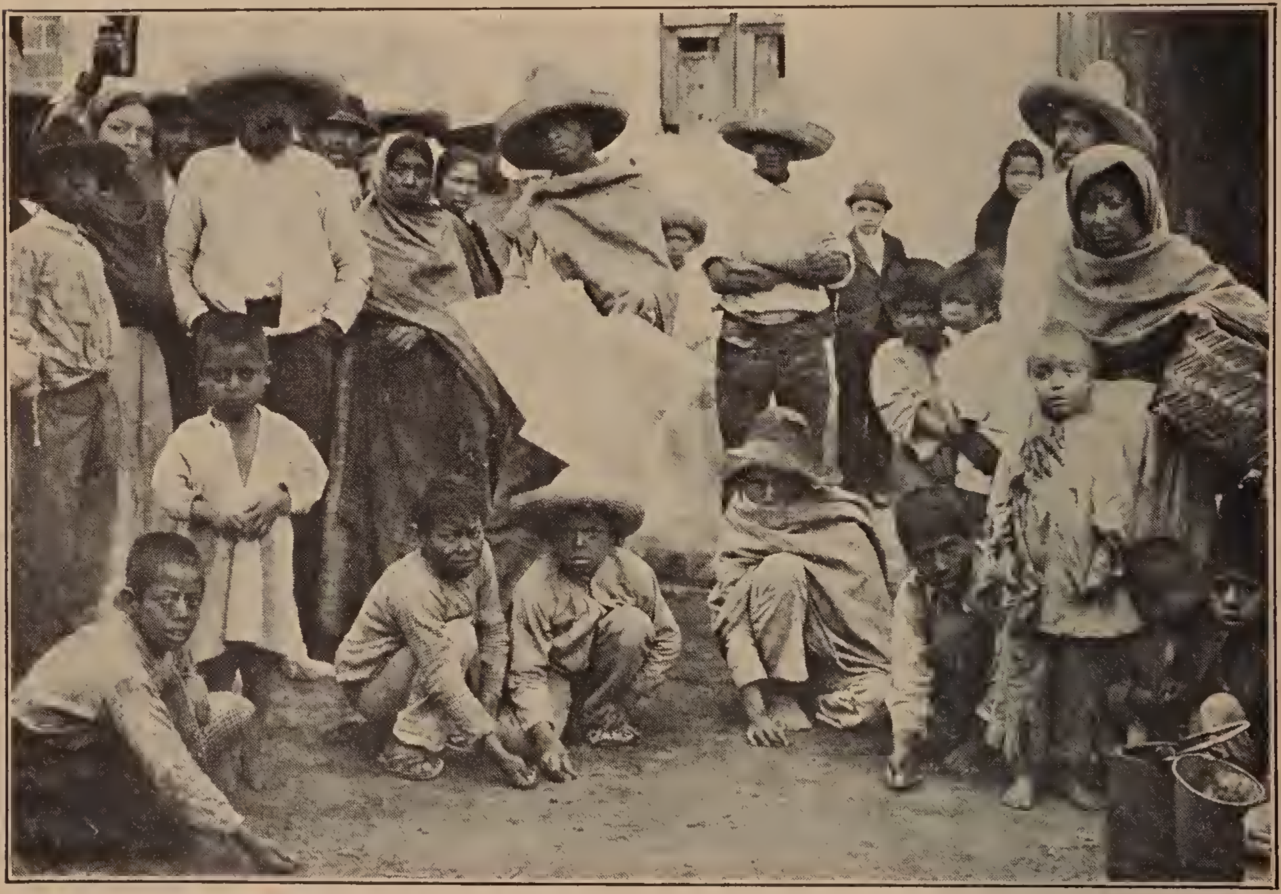
In going through the building I saw warehouse after warehouse filled with household goods of every conceivable kind There were hundreds of metal bathtubs, chairs, stools, candlesticks, tables, and beds. There were great shelves filled with clothing. There were organs, talking machines, and pianos by dozens. There were also kitchen and cooking utensils, and many things one would not be able to pawn in the States. The smallest sum loaned on any article is six cents of our money, and the loans run from that up to two thousand dollars. About fifty thousand pieces are pawned every month, and something like five hundred thousand dollars in loans is given out in that time. All but about ten per cent. are redeemed. The interest is paid monthly and amounts to twenty thousand dollars and upward.

I observed the process of lending. The moment a pledge is brought an expert appraises it, and the loan is only a

The whining voices of beggars are heard everywhere in Mexico City. If their appeals get too bothersome, they can usually be turned away with the words: "Pardon me, in the name of God."



Past the municipal palace, which faces the plaza, the main stream of life in Mexico City ceaselessly flows, bearing all sorts and conditions of men. The site was purchased from the heirs of Cortes for $12,000.



Besides its fine parks and boulevards, Mexico City has a tenement district housing one fourth of the people, sometimes as many as twelve to a room. There the streets swarm with children in rags.

certain percentage of this valuation. This amount is always proportionately low, for if the pledge is unclaimed, and it cannot be sold, the valuator has to take it himself, giving therefor the amount of the loan and the interest. As long as the interest is paid all pledges are held, but if the payments stop they are offered for sale. In going through the courts, warehouses, and salesrooms I found price tags on everything. These showed the original values and the loans. In many cases the values had been reduced three or four times, and most things seemed to me wonderfully cheap. Indeed, the first price put on is about what the goods would bring in a second-hand store. This is held for a month, and then, if no one comes to buy it, is reduced. The next month it is marked down again, and this goes on from month to month until the end of five months, when, if it is not sold, the valuator must take back the article.

I spent some time in the jewellery salesroom. Here were cases of pearls and diamonds, and quantities of rings, brooches, and pins set with jewels. I saw earrings with pearls as big as the end of your finger, and great sapphires and emeralds valued at from five hundred to four thousand dollars. Many of the jewels were in sets, consisting of bracelets, brooches, and earrings, with now and then a tiara of diamonds to match. Jewellery is bought by the Mexican women for display, and they are great purchasers of flashy "sunbursts" and elaborate ornaments of all sorts. Mexico imports quantities of second-grade stones, for the people here have not our idea of buying best-quality gems as an investment.

Sometimes tourists pick up great bargains in jewellery at the Monte de Piedad. I know of one man who got a beautiful brooch containing a half-dozen pearls and four diamonds for one hundred dollars, and of another who bought a fine diamond ring for half that amount. I coveted a set of jewels the price of which had been cut from five hundred to three hundred dollars, but I thought of our customs and did not invest.

Just before a bull-fight there is likely to be a rush of goods to the pawnshops. During the revolutionary period the bull-fights were discontinued for a time. Within a few months after their revival twenty thousand watches were pawned in Mexico City to get money for the price of admission to the Plaza de Toros.

I wish you might witness one of the auctions of this national pawnshop. They are attended by the motley throng that makes up the crowds of the Mexican capital. There are men in sombreros, short jackets, and tight-fitting trousers. There are women in black, with mantillas over their heads, and there are people dressed much like those in our own cities. At the auctions the pledges put on sale include chromos and oil paintings, bicycles and mirrors, saddles and harness, household goods and clothing, and jewellery and trinkets of every imaginable kind and description. The goods are put up at the request of the would-be purchasers and are often knocked down to the first bidders. Everything has been appraised, and there is no false bidding. The great bargains in good things, however, are usually sold before the auctions take place.

The Monte de Piedad is the oldest loan institution in Mexico. It was founded before our Declaration of Independence was signed. It was capitalized at three hundred thousand dollars, and its purpose was to free the poor people from the usurious rates of interest charged by private pawnbrokers. The founder was Count de Regla, who owned what was then the bonanza mine of Mexico.

In 1884 the Monte de Piedad came near failing on account of its issue of demand liabilities based on long-term loans. It then held a cash reserve of two and one half millions against a circulation of four millions, but a panic came, a run was made, and the institution was compelled to suspend. Outside aid was obtained, however, and it kept on its feet.

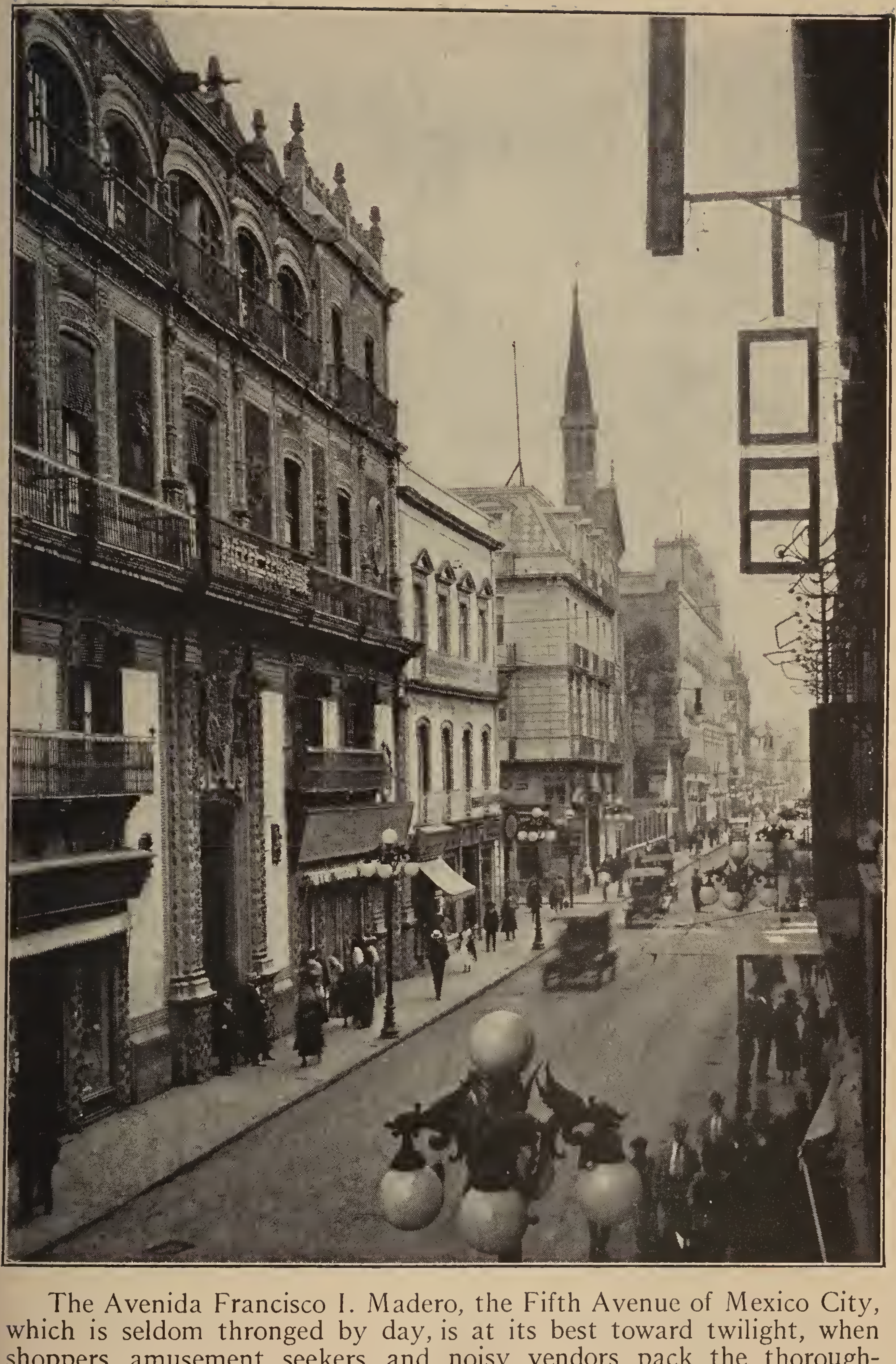
Mexico was put on a gold standard by Diaz, with the peso worth practically fifty cents gold. Before that it used to run up and down, fluctuating according to the amount of silver it contained. During the last revolutionary period paper money was issued, but as soon as recovery began the paper pesos were redeemed at the rate of one hundred thousand a day and burned in the Public Square of Mexico City. The country is now back on a gold basis.

Before the Madero revolution, the financial condition of the government was sound. Considering the assets of Mexico, the public debt was small, for it amounted to only a little over two hundred million dollars, or about one fifth of what the United States then owed. Even to-day, after passing through ten years of upheaval, the Mexican Republic owes less, proportionately, than other nations with comparable resources. The government and the international bankers agree that it amounts to less than three quarters of a billion, or approximately fifty dollars per capita. We came out of the World War with a per capita debt many times larger, while some of the European countries owe much more.

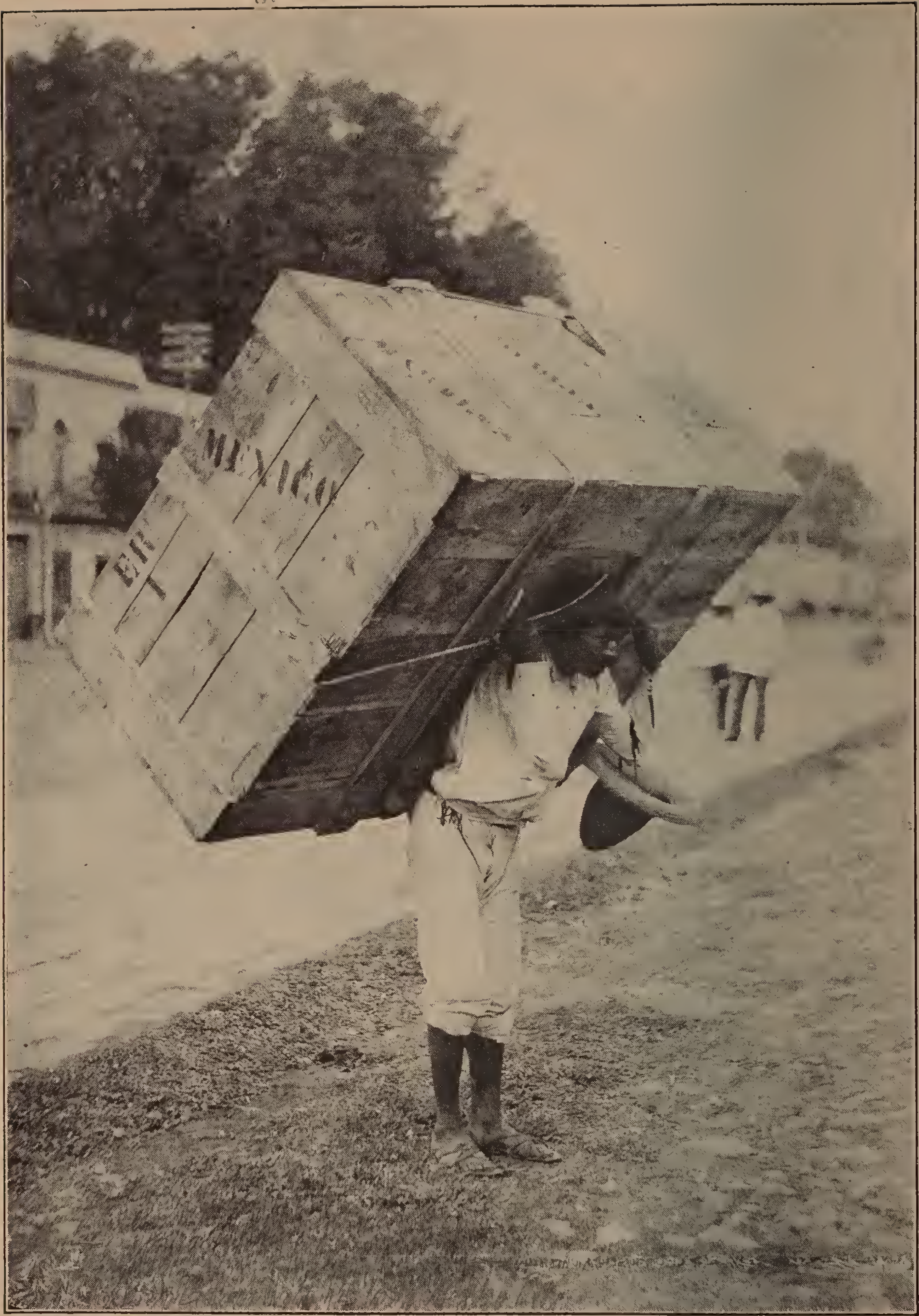
It is the habit of the Mexicans to hoard money. There are said to be millions upon millions under the courtyards or hidden away in the walls of the rich haciendas. Men die, leaving supposedly worthless estates, and thousands of dollars are found in their miserable homes. Not long ago an American brought suit to collect a debt from a man in one of the provincial cities. He got a judgment and the defendant said: "I can't pay you, but my father will." The father was called on and he took the officials down into a cellar under his house where there was four hundred thousand dollars stored away in four hundred bags, each containing one thousand dollars. The judgment was for five thousand dollars and five of the bags were handed over in payment therefor.

In addition to the Monte de Piedad there are many private pawnshops in Mexico City. At these the loans are more costly and five or ten per cent. a month is frequently paid. It is unsafe to attempt to borrow on stolen wares at the Monte de Piedad, but this is not true of some of the private pawnshops, which are said to be fences or receivers of stolen goods. Indeed, when a Mexican loses a piece of personal property he generally accuses his servants of the theft. On their emphatic denial a sudden demand for the pawn tickets for the goods is often successful. Before the establishment of modern laundries in Mexico one sometimes recognized in one of these pawnshops the shirt he had too trustingly confided to the hands of a dishonest washerwoman.

There is one trading place here which has so much questionable merchandise that it goes by the name of the Thieves' Market. It is not far from the Cathedral and just off the main market house of the city. It is on a



The Avenida Francisco I. Madero, the Fifth Avenue of Mexico City, which is seldom thronged by day, is at its best toward twilight, when shoppers, amusement seekers, and noisy vendors pack the thoroughfares. Many of the best American stores are here.



Cortes found the Aztecs a brave people who built cities, made beautiful articles of silver and gold, and had worked out a calendar and a written language. To-day they are meek and ignorant burden bearers.

street once occupied by the palace of Montezuma, where the first bull ring was afterward established by the Spaniards. On the same spot thirteen heretics were condemned to be burned to death during the Spanish Inquisition. It is only a century or so since the land has been cleared and made the property of the city.

In my walk through this market I kept my hands on my pocketbook, but I was not molested. I examined the goods, finding nothing of value in the shape of curios and no gold and silver set with jewels. Most of the wares seemed to be trinkets, household goods, and old clothing. There was a great stock of the latter, and as I looked at the silk dresses and men's suits of one kind or another I bethought me of the warning I had been given when I spent my first night in Mexico. My adviser was an old resident. Said he:

"In going to bed on the ground floor you must be careful to put your trousers under the mattress and lay your other clothes near the wall farthest away from the window, especially if you leave your blinds open. This country has many sneak thieves and there are professionals who have jointed rods with hooks at the end, with which they can reach through the bars and drag out your clothing. You must also watch out for your pockets, particularly in crowds and on the street cars. It is not safe to leave your car window open while travelling on the railways and you want to keep an eye on your camera."

Since then I have found reason to appreciate these suggestions. A man travelling with me had his pocket picked two days after he entered Mexico, and this has scared him so that he now does not venture out without one hand in his trousers. I am told that the thieves steal wire cable and electric wiring. They cut through the roofs to get into the stores and warerooms and even try to rob the poor boxes of the churches. The railways lose thousands of bolts from the cars and tracks every year and even the fishplates are sometimes taken from the rails. Doormats are usually chained down. It is hardly safe to put an ash-barrel out into the street and potted plants and flowers are often stolen, while a vacant house frequently loses its lead pipe, electric globes, and bath fixtures.

CHAPTER XIV

MEXICO'S BLOODY ALTAR

MEXICO is a land of blood. It has always been so, and that it is so to-day is shown again and again in every revolution. Human life is held at a discount by the great bulk of the people, made up as they are for the most part of Indians and half-breeds. Even those who have held the highest places in the struggle for power have usually risen on the dead bodies of their opponents. Their followers have been permitted to torture the victims who fell into their hands and among the thousands slaughtered by soldiers, rebels, and bandits in recent years have been many Americans. Our government files at Washington bear the names of nearly four hundred citizens of the United States murdered in Mexico during the decade from 1910 to 1920, while hundreds of others were subjected to outrages of every description.

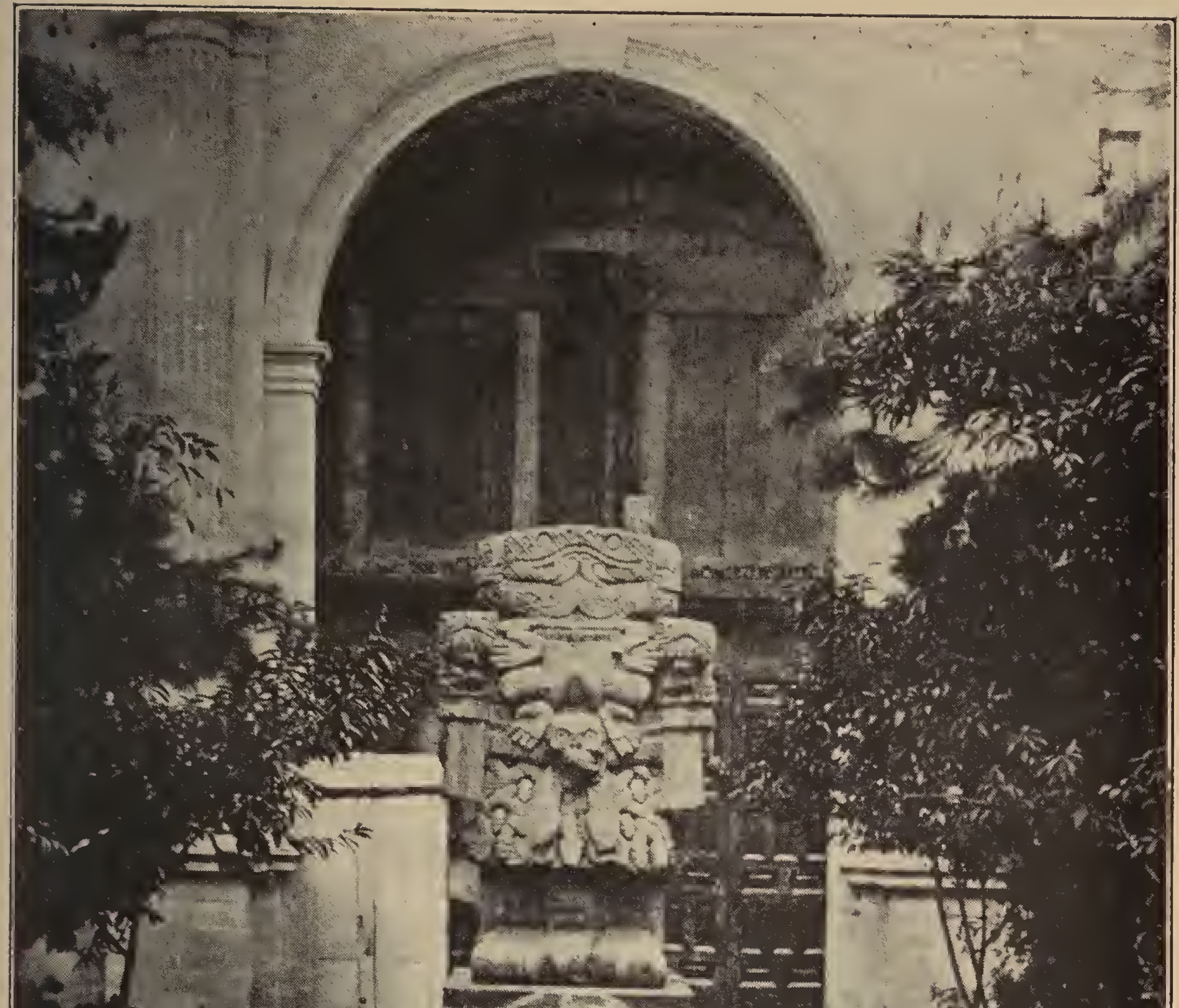
That such always has been the record of Mexico, is proved by evidence right here in the capital. In the National Museum is the sacrificial stone of the Aztecs, one of the bloodiest shrines upon earth.

I say bloody shrine and I mean it. The stone, so small that it would not fill the parlour of a thirty-dollar flat, was bathed again and again in streams of blood. All the deaths of Mexico's decade of revolution are nothing in comparison with the numbers who died on this block of granite. Upon it the Spaniards saw their comrades slain by the Aztecs. The men were stripped to their waists, and Cortes and his soldiers, standing at the foot of the mound on which the stone rested, could tell them by the contrast of their white skins against those of their copper-coloured executioners. The Spaniards' heads were adorned with feathers, and they were made to dance as they went up. As soon as they were stripped, their naked bodies were laid upon this stone. Then came a flash of the knife and a moment later the priests held up the still pulsating hearts of the victims and threw them to the horrid idol of the Aztec god of war.

On great occasions, such as the crowning of a king or the dedication of a temple, men were slaughtered by the thousands. Six years before Columbus came to America the temple to the Aztec god of war was consecrated. The prisoners, who for several years had been held in reserve for this festival, were ranged in files and formed a procession two miles long. The bloodshed went on for days and it is said that seventy thousand perished on the sacrificial stone. In one of the buildings near the Teocalli, the great temple of the Aztecs, the Spaniards with Cortes found one hundred and thirty-six thousand skulls of those who had thus been killed. Among them were the remains of men, women, and children.

But let me tell you how the stone looks. It was thrown down by Cortes in the general destruction of Montezuma's capital. That was more than four hundred years ago. After lying buried for more than three centuries, the stone was dug up, and the authorities ordered it to be broken to pieces, intending to use it for paving the city. One of the Catholic priests objected, however, and it was saved.

Nothing brings one closer to the Aztecs than this sacri-



The sacrificial stone of the Aztecs was bathed in streams of blood from the thousands of victims offered up before a hideous image of the god of war.

Cuernavaca was one of thirty cities the Emperor of Spain gave to Cortes. Here the conqueror built himself a palace which houses today the Morelos state legislature, and here for a time he devoted himself to raising sugar.

Even when the Spaniards built a fire under his feet, Guatemoc, the last prince of the Aztecs, refused to reveal the hiding place of the treasures of the Montezumas. His torture is depicted on his statue in Mexico City.

ficial stone. It is perfectly round and its rim is covered with carvings. In the centre of the top is a hole as big as a tin wash basin, with a groove running out to the rim. The hole was used, it is thought, to hold the hearts of the victims.

The Aztecs observed a ritual in making their sacrifices, and the most distinguished of the captives were often given a chance to fight for their lives. Besides the stone of sacrifice there was a gladiatorial stone with a ring in its top, upon which the victim, stripped to the skin, fought under the eyes of the king and other spectators. The man was chained to the rock and given a wooden sword and shield. Thus equipped, he contended with a soldier armed with a sword of obsidian, a glasslike substance made from a kind of volcanic lava. The obsidian weapon had a razor-like edge, and the contest was, of course, very unequal. Nevertheless, the wooden sword sometimes prevailed, and the captive won his freedom. If he failed or was wounded, his body was carried to the sacrificial stone and there offered to the god of the Aztecs.

The most famous of all Aztec sacrifices was that which took place once every year, when the victim was the handsomest youth of the nation. The priests who made the selection insisted on his being physically perfect, without a single blemish and in possession of all the graces of youth. He was chosen a year prior to the sacrifice, and from that time until his death he lived like a prince. He was wined and dined and had four of the most beautiful girls in the land as his mistresses. He was the gilded youth of his time, and passed his days with music and feasting upon flowery beds of ease. Thus he lived gaily until the day of his doom.

When the final hour came he said good-bye to his sweethearts, and decorated with flowers, took his place on the stone. Then a priest dressed in red drove his knife into the breast of the youth and pulled out his heart. It was held aloft before the eyes of the people and they fell on their knees in adoration. Later on the body was cut into pieces and distributed to a favoured few who cooked and served it on their tables as the tidbit of the year.

Prescott states that this was the only kind of cannibalism practised by the Aztecs, and says that these feasts were served up in royal style. The cooking was done by the country's best culinary artists, and men and women came together to enjoy the horrible menu.

Human sacrifices began in Mexico two or three hundred years before the Spaniards landed. In addition to the Teocalli in Mexico City there were sacrificial pyramids and mounds in different parts of the country, and whenever plagues or other calamities visited a region the victims increased in number.

In times of drought, when the rain gods were supposed to be angry with the people, infants were offered up to appease them. The tears shed by the babies were believed to be a good omen for the passing of the drought. Our archæologists have discovered that among the Mayas, the rain gods were propitiated with offerings of the most beautiful maidens. They were thrown down a deep natural well in the ancient city of Chichenitza in Yucatan. This well became a sacred shrine to which pilgrims journeyed from great distances to make their oblations of jade, copper, pottery, and bells.

The deity in whose honour many of the Aztecs' human sacrifices were offered was the god of war and bloodshed, whose chief representation may be seen in the National Museum. This is a block of stone nine feet in height covered with carving. It represents a squatty figure with a great flat head out of which peep two cylindrical eyes above four little horns that serve as noses. The mouth is large and the head rests on the shoulders without any neck. When Cortes, in company with King Montezuma, first saw this statue it stood not far from the sacrificial stone. It was then covered with gold and studded with jewels. Golden serpents were wound about its waist, and a necklace of life-size hands and hearts of gold and silver encircled the neck. Before it was burning a pan of incense in which the hearts of three human beings were roasting After the Spaniards had conquered, they tore off the gold, silver, and jewels. They threw down the statue, and it was years later that it was brought forth as an archaeological relic.

CHAPTER XV

CORTES AND THE MONTEZUMAS

DO YOU know that descendants of both Hernando Cortes and the Emperor Montezuma, whom he conquered, are still living in Mexico and in Europe? Some of them have in their possession big estates once owned by the Aztec ruler or the Spanish invader. The family of Montezuma was large and he left his children to the care of Cortes, who promised to look after them as though they were his own. This Cortes did, sending them to Spain, where they were educated in the imperial household of Charles V. Some of them intermarried with Spanish nobles and to-day there are great landed properties in Salamanca that have come down through fourteen generations from a son of Montezuma. The present head of the family has the title of Marquis de Castellano. He is a high Spanish noble, with some of the imperial blood of the Aztecs in his veins.

The Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III, was a descendant of one of Montezuma's children, while the same blood tints even some of the ducal families of England. A relative of Columbus's eldest son is said to have married into the Aztec emperor's family. There are still several Montezumas in Mexico City. One is a lawyer, another a banker, and a third a musician. Other families here, although no longer called Montezuma, are said to trace their ancestry back to the imperial ruler. One of Montezuma's daughters became the mistress of Cortes, who was a man of many loves and several marriages. He left the University of Salamanca at the age of sixteen on account of his love affairs, and when he had first decided to try his fortune in the New World, his departure was postponed by a tumble from a wall which he was scaling in order to meet a sweetheart. He was only nineteen years old when he sailed for Santo Domingo, and there he became intimate with a beautiful Spanish girl named Catalina Juarez. For a time he refused to marry her, but was afterward forced to do so. She brought him lands and money, as well as the friendship of the governor, Velasquez, who later on sent him from Cuba in command of the expedition to conquer Mexico. On this expedition Cortes landed in what is now the State of Tabasco. There he picked up a beautiful Indian girl, Marina, and made her his mistress. He taught her Spanish, and she became the interpreter through whom he talked with the natives of different parts of Mexico.

The two lived together at Mexico City or at Cortes's residence near by and she went with him during his tours. He had an estate at Orizaba and it was in his palace there that he married off the Lady Marina, as she was then called, to one of his lieutenants. By this husband she had a number of children. As late as the close of the seventeenth century the heirs of Doña Marina and Jaramillo were living near Orizaba, while the great estate once owned by the Lady Marina is famous to-day for its imported live-stock.

While Cortes was living with Marina, his wife, whom he had left in Cuba, came to Mexico. She sneaked into the country without his knowledge and came to Coyoacan, his seat of government just outside of Mexico City. He took her into his palace, and there, as the story goes, after one of his riotous banquets, strangled her with her own necklace of pearls. Others say that she committed suicide. At any rate, after Cortes returned to Spain he was indicted for murdering his wife. The case occupies many pages in the "Archives of the Indies," which tell the story of the crime, the judicial proceedings against the conquerer, and his final acquittal. Cortes married again while he was in Spain, taking there a wife, Doña Juanna de Zunigay Arellano, a woman of title and wealth. He had a son by her, who was christened Don Martín and who inherited most of the property.

The daughter of Montezuma, whom Cortes took as one of his mistresses, had been given the Christian name of Isabella. She had been married to Guatemoc, Montezuma's nephew and successor, who fought against Cortes and who was put to death by the Spaniards in 1522. Cortes was accused of having him executed in order that he might possess Isabella. Some time afterward Isabella married again, this time a Spaniard. He died and she married once more and had three sons and a daughter. One of her sons married a daughter of the Duke of Toledo.

It is also said that Isabella had a daughter by Cortes named Leonor, and that when she died she made a will giving her estate to her six children, stating that five of them were legitimate by her two Spanish husbands, and that the other, the said Leonor Cortes, was a natural daughter by the great general. This will is said to be still in existence. Leonor Cortes married and her daughter was known as the Princess Acaltán, from whom is descended the Duke of Soteles de Montezuma of Madrid.

The first husband of Isabella, the Emperor Guatemoc, was one of the famous characters of Aztec history. The Spaniards tortured him by fire to make him reveal where the Aztecs had buried their treasure. With him during the roasting was another chief who could not stand the pain and cried out that he felt he must tell. Thereupon Guatemoc shook his head and said sternly:

"Am I taking my pleasure in my bath?"

The painting of this scene is one of the great pictures of the National Museum. Guatemoc's words have become proverbial in Mexico, being used when one has his own troubles yet is asked to bear those of others.

Cortes, like Columbus, had a sad time during his latter days. When he left Mexico for the last time and went back to Spain, he found he was out of favour at the court of Charles V. At one time he tried to force his way through the crowd to the Emperor's carriage, and even put his foot on the step. Thereupon the Emperor, astonished at his assurance, demanded to know who he was. Cortes replied:

"I am a man, Sire, who has given you more provinces than your ancestors left you cities."

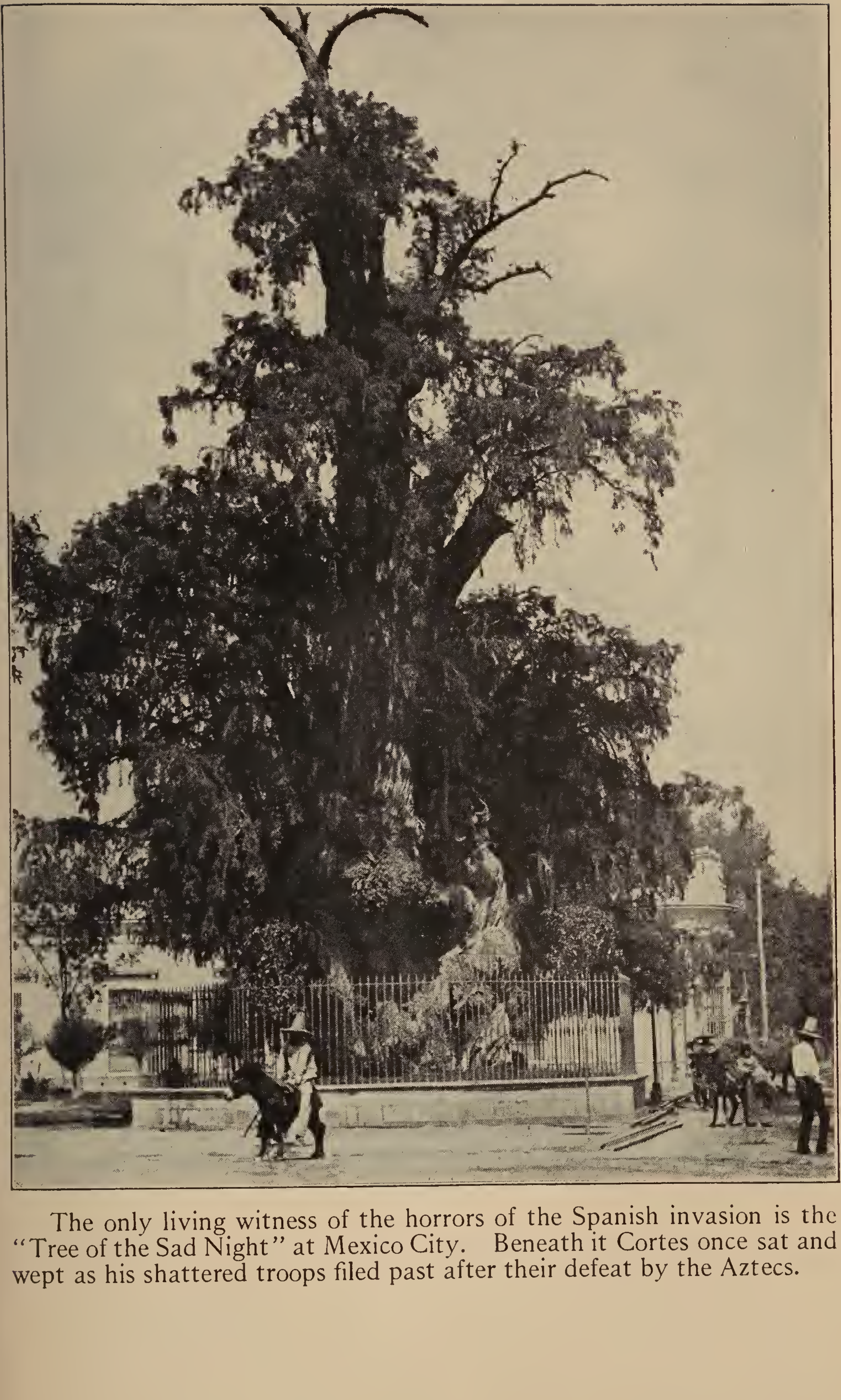
At the time of his death he held the title of Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca and owned great estates in the land he had conquered in the name of his king. He had properties in the Valley of Mexico, others near Cuernavaca, and some on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. He had also a palace and other valuable property at Coyoacan. This remained in the hands of his heirs until some years ago, when it was taken over by the town council.

His so-called palace, which still stands, was for a long time used as the city council chamber and jail. It was one of the first buildings erected by white men on the North American continent and bears the Cortes coat of arms over its doorway. Similar insignia have been found in Cuernavaca, Vera Cruz, and Oaxaca.

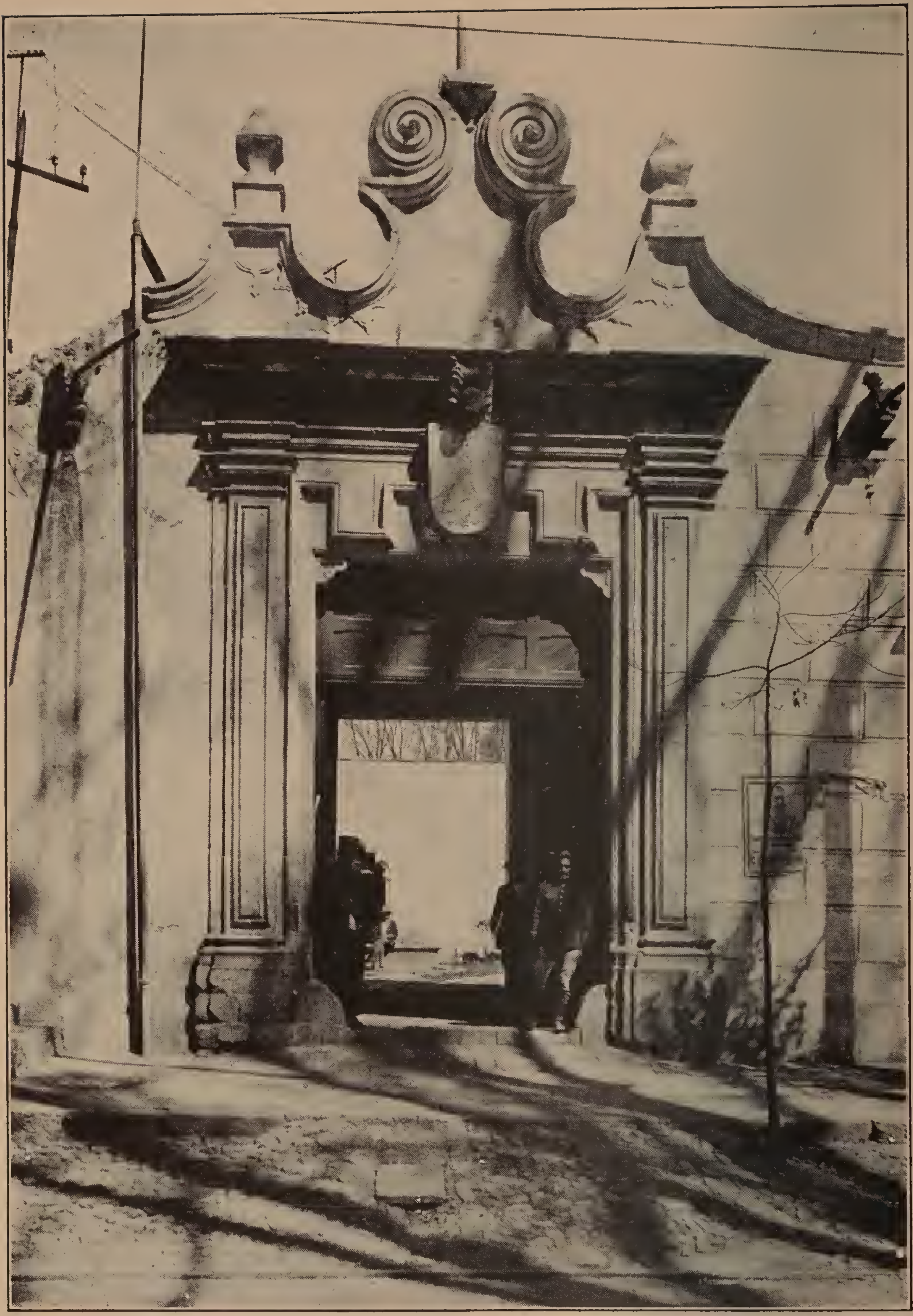
This Coyoacan palace is a rude building without much architectural beauty, but the doorway inside the patio is Moorish. The cornice of the building is plain. The walls are thick and the house was evidently a fortification as well as a home. Near by is the Church of John the Baptist, which was erected about the same time, and not far away is the Dominican monastery where Cortes is said to have strangled his Cuban wife.

Nobody knows the exact extent of the lands given to Cortes, but they probably amounted to millions of acres. The property he had in Tehuantepec, which comprised several hundred thousand acres, was for many years the home of his descendants. He erected a house there in 1527 but it is now in ruins. The estate has been divided into three ranches. One of them has seventy thousand acres and is devoted chiefly to stock raising. Another has seven thousand acres of sugar cane on it, and a third is right on the Tehuantepec railway, having a station of its own. It is not far from Rincón Antonio. This property remained in the hands of the heirs of Cortes until the days of Andrew Jackson, when it was purchased by the family that now holds it.

When Cortes died he gave some of his Cuernavaca lands to the hospital and church of Jesus of Nazareth, which is not far from the Cathedral in Mexico City. In this church are preserved his patent of nobility and the documents



The only living witness of the horrors of the Spanish invasion is the "Tree of the Sad Night" at Mexico City. Beneath it Cortes once sat and wept as his shattered troops filed past after their defeat by the Aztecs.



Cortes's coat of arms may still be seen over the main entrance to the palace he built at Coyoacan four hundred years ago. It was here that he strangled his Spanish wife with her own pearl necklace giving him title to his lands. The hospital stands on the site of Montezuma's palace, where the Emperor was stoned to death by a mob of his own people whom he was trying to pacify.

After he came back from Spain in 1530, Cortes built a palace at Cuernavaca which was for a time his favourite residence. There he personally superintended the cultivation of his vast estates. He introduced sugar cane from Cuba and erected sugar mills and other works. Most of the estates have been more or less subdivided, and the town of Cuernavaca, which contains about seven thousand people, has grown up on his land. The place is noted for its beautiful views and is also celebrated as a health resort.

The cathedral of Cuernavaca is one of the oldest and quaintest in Mexico. It is known as the Church of San Francisco and was founded at the suggestion of Cortes. For years it was the most important Franciscan institution on this continent. The tower contains a clock which the Emperor Charles V gave to Cortes at the same time that he gave him most of the great valley to be seen from the top of the tower. The clock is run by weights that hang almost to the ground. They are wound up at intervals by a mechanism at the top.

It is interesting to follow the footsteps of Cortes through Mexico. Sailing out of the harbour of Santiago de Cuba, he touched first at Tabasco, on the Gulf Coast southeast of Vera Cruz. He coasted along the Mexican Gulf until he came to the bay of Vera Cruz. There he landed and made his first settlement, building rude huts and mounting guns to defend his expedition from the Indians. He had at this time ten vessels in the harbour, and his force consisted of about seven hundred Spaniards, eighteen horses, and some pieces of cannon. Having already learned at Tabasco of the Emperor Montezuma, Cortes sent a message to him as soon as he landed at Vera Cruz saying that he, Cortes, came as the ambassador of a mighty ruler from beyond the seas to bring him a present. This letter was put in the form of picture writing by an Aztec chieftain and sent by messenger to the capital.

The runner service of the Aztecs was so swift that an answer came back within one week, although the distance covered was more than two hundred miles each way. The reply from Montezuma was that the road to the capital was long and dangerous, and that Cortes had best not come. The Emperor added: "You had better go back to your own country with our greetings to your mighty king."

Montezuma sent presents with this letter. Among them were two huge plates, one of solid gold and the other of silver. Each plate was as big around as a cart wheel, or about twenty feet in circumference, and the gold wheel was afterward estimated to be worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There were also necklaces of rubies and pearls, and many golden shields, inlaid and decorated.

One can easily imagine the effect these presents had on the Spaniards. Cortes replied that he had come six thousand miles over the oceans to see Montezuma, and he could not go back to his king without having personally met him. The Aztec sent back a ceremonious message telling Cortes to leave, but notwithstanding all this, the Spaniard started inland. With his little band he made his way over the mountains, marching to the conquest of a nation of millions. The story has been wonderfully told in the works of Prescott and others, and those times have been pictured in the novels of Rider Haggard and of our own General Lew Wallace.

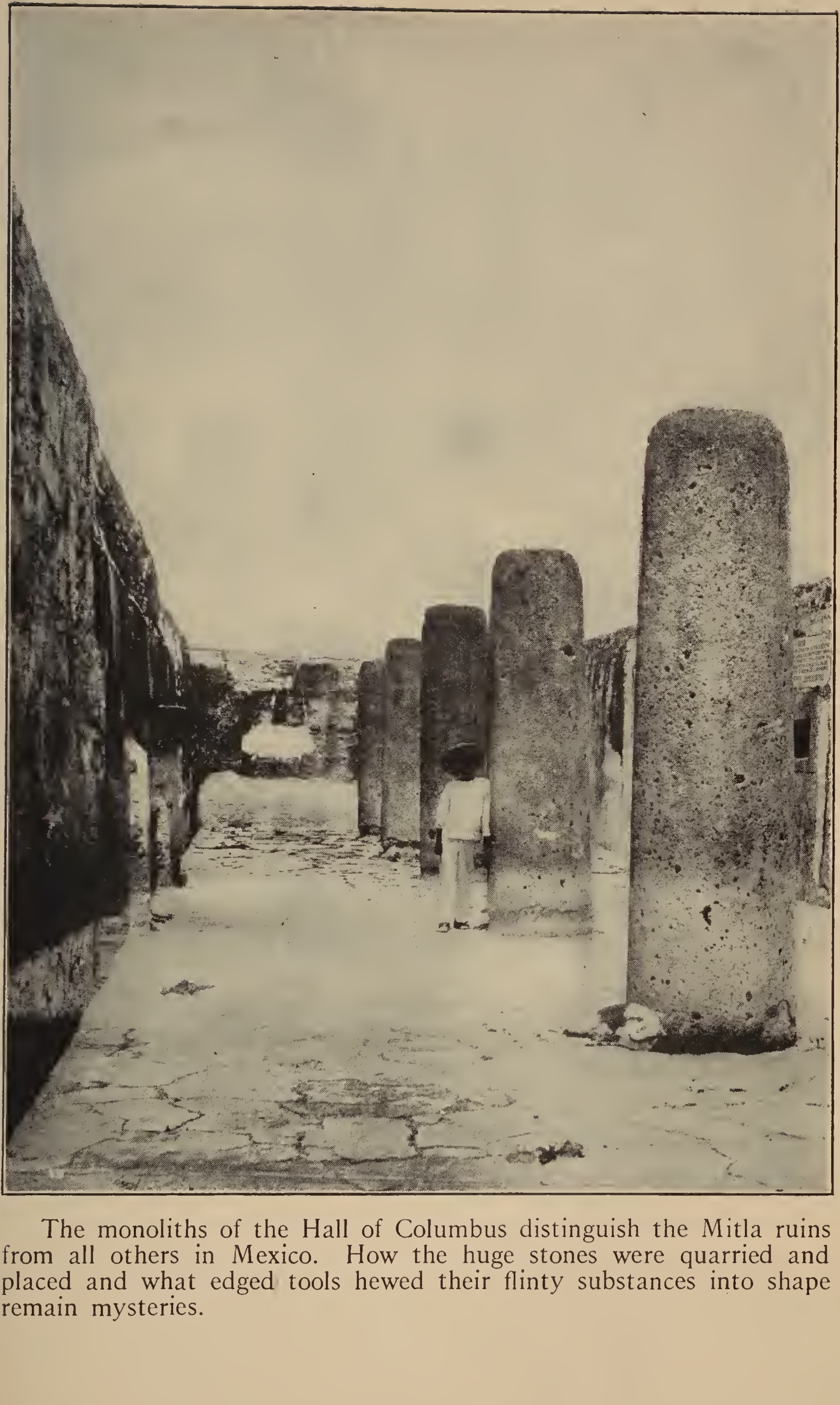
Cortes drafted one thousand Indian porters to transport his baggage over the two hundred miles. Most of his way was through the wilderness. At the town of Tlaxcala, near Puebla, he fought with the Indians of that name and made them his allies. The place is now a shabby village, the chief interest of which is its collection of Cortes relics.

It was at this point that some of the Spaniards turned aside to ascend Popocatepetl and get from the volcano sulphur for making gunpowder. Near by was the great Indian town of Amecameca, lying on the slope of the volcano. Passing through this place, Cortes and his men entered the Valley of Mexico.

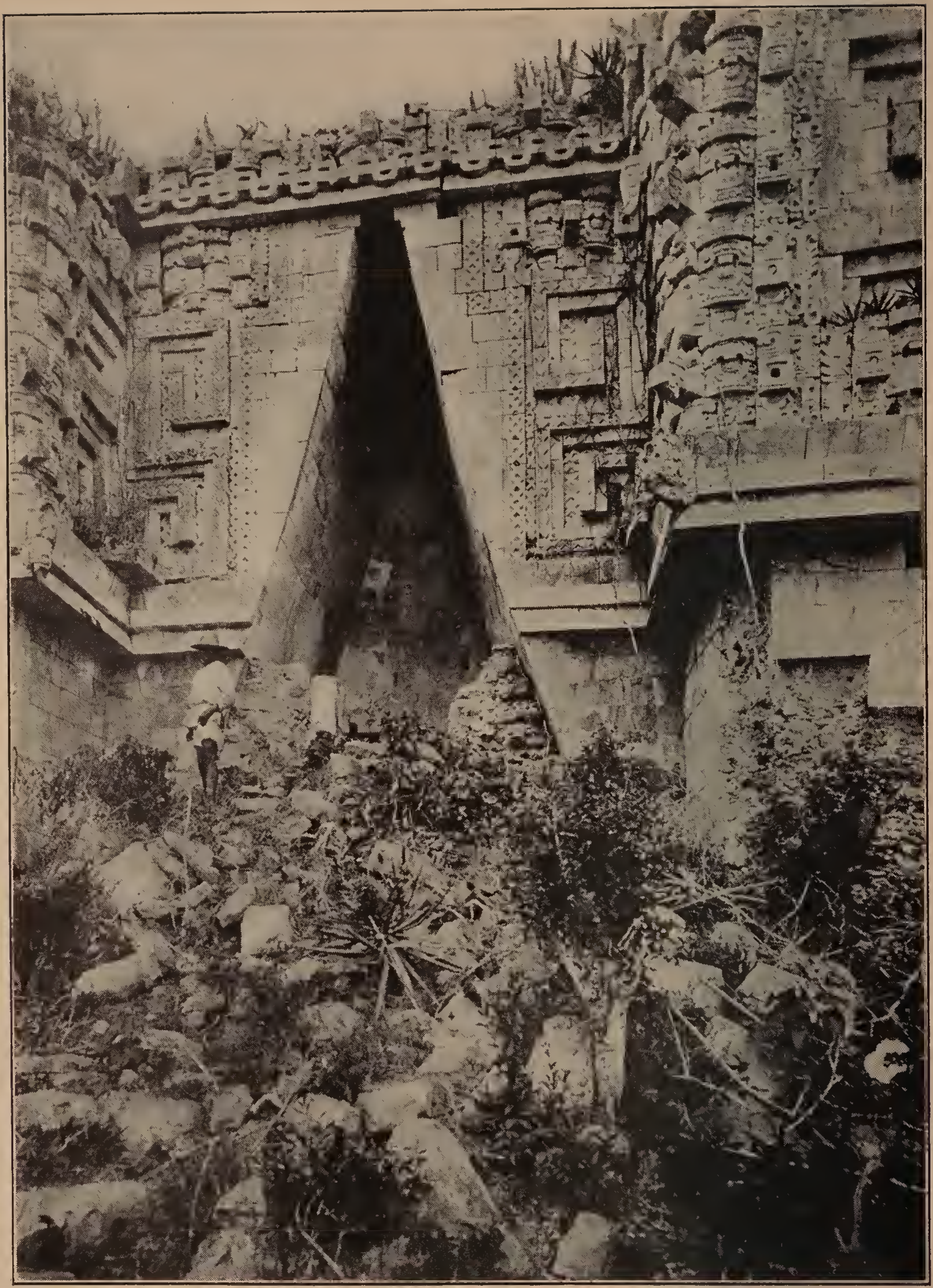
Mexico City is to-day full of reminders of Cortes and the Montezumas. I have already spoken of the Cathedral standing on the site of the great Aztec temple, of the Hospital of Jesus, which marks the spot where Montezuma welcomed the Spaniards, and of Chapultepec, which was the summer residence of the Aztec emperor. At Chapultepec Montezuma had his favourite wives, his fish ponds, his aviary, and his hunting lodge. One can ride out to it now on the street car. The Spaniards made their way there in boats and on foot. Farther out of the city you may trace the causeway by which Cortes entered the capital, and find the place where once were the famous gardens in which Montezuma and Guatemoc entertained the Spaniards.

There is one spot, however, which you will fail to find—the grave of Cortes. Where that is no one knows. Fifteen years after Cortes died in Spain, his son Don

Martín had his body exhumed and brought to Mexico. It was first placed in the Monastery of San Francisco, in Texcoco, and later brought to the Church of San Francisco in Mexico City. It lay in that church for more than one hundred and fifty years before it was again brought forth in a great procession and carried to the Hospital of Jesus of Nazareth. There it lay for thirty years, and then for fear of a mob that threatened to destroy it, friends of the family entered the tomb by night and secretly removed the remains. Some believe that they were again buried in Mexico, and others will tell you that they rest in the tombs of the Sicilian branch of the family near Palermo. As to the truth, I am unable to say.



The monoliths of the Hall of Columbus distinguish the Mitla ruins from all others in Mexico. How the huge stones were quarried and placed and what edged tools hewed their flinty substances into shape remain mysteries.



Walls of carved stone and arches built without keystones bear witness at Uxmal and other ancient cities in Yucatan to the advanced culture possessed by the Mayas centuries before Columbus discovered the New World.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CULTURE OF THE AZTECS AND THE MAYAS

THE Mexicans of to-day are thoroughly alive to the archaeological possibilities of their own country. They are anxious to have the ruins explored, and have given concessions to foreigners to do much of the work. Not a few have been given to Americans connected with the Smithsonian Institution and others of our societies, and their members have made great discoveries.

Perhaps the most interesting finds are those now being made in southeastern Mexico, which is a veritable archaeologist's paradise. The recent discoveries relate to the ancient civilization of the Mayas, Indians who reached the highest state of development of any native race on the North American continent. Mayan history has been traced back more than two thousand years and the remnants of the Maya kingdoms preserved their identity and resisted conquest down to the days of the Mexican Republic. The Mayas were spread over the entire peninsula of Yucatan, all of Guatemala, and part of the Republic of Salvador. Ruins of hundreds of their cities are in existence to-day, and it is estimated that one million three hundred thousand Indians still speak Maya dialects exclusively.

From the archaeological standpoint the Mayas are most noted for their architecture, their calendar, and their hieroglyphics. They had paved streets, cement-lined reservoirs for storing water, and great public buildings. They had a central government, and, like other Indians in Mexico, held their lands in common. Although the fanatical Spaniards destroyed most of the records which fell into their hands, this loss has been partially restored by the studies of the ruins of the ancient cities, temples, and monuments through which our scientists have built up a picture of the Maya civilization.

Ruins at Chichenitza and elsewhere in Yucatan show in great variety the different forms of such development. At Chichenitza, for example, is a great pyramid, more than one hundred feet high and five hundred and fifty feet square at the base, with a building nearly two hundred feet long on the top. The walls contain some of the best specimens of Mayan painting, with colouring so vivid that modern enamel makers have tried to discover the secret of the processes used. The ancient temples and other buildings were adorned with figures carved in bas-relief and covered with picture-writings, many of which have now been translated. Examples of the Maya arch built without a keystone are still standing.

The Mayan calendar was even more advanced than that of the Aztecs. It divided the year into eighteen months of twenty days each, and five-day weeks, with five "nameless days" left over at the end of each year.

Besides the carvings and picture-writing a few of the Mayan books remain. These are writings on paper made from the maguey, or cactus plant, covered with a thin coating of stucco. Many of the discoveries are due to the chewing gum industry, for it was in connection with the gathering of chicle that some of the cities concealed in the jungles were found and the attention of our scientists was attracted to them. The Mexicans themselves have done a great deal of archaeological research. One of the Spanish viceroys ordered that all the relics dug up in the capital should be taken to the old University of Mexico and from there they came to the National Museum. Maximilian also was interested in such investigations, and Diaz encouraged them.

There is no doubt that many interesting things still lie under the Mexican capital. Every time a new sewer is dug or a great foundation excavated a fresh discovery is made. The sacrificial stone was found buried near the southwest corner of the Cathedral, and the Aztec calendar stone, which is also in the museum, was originally found under the earth in the great plaza. When it was taken up the Archbishop of Mexico, fearing that it might be worshipped by the Indians, ordered that it be re-buried. Later on it was again dug up and cemented on to the base of one of the Cathedral towers, where it remained until a generation ago when it was removed to the museum.

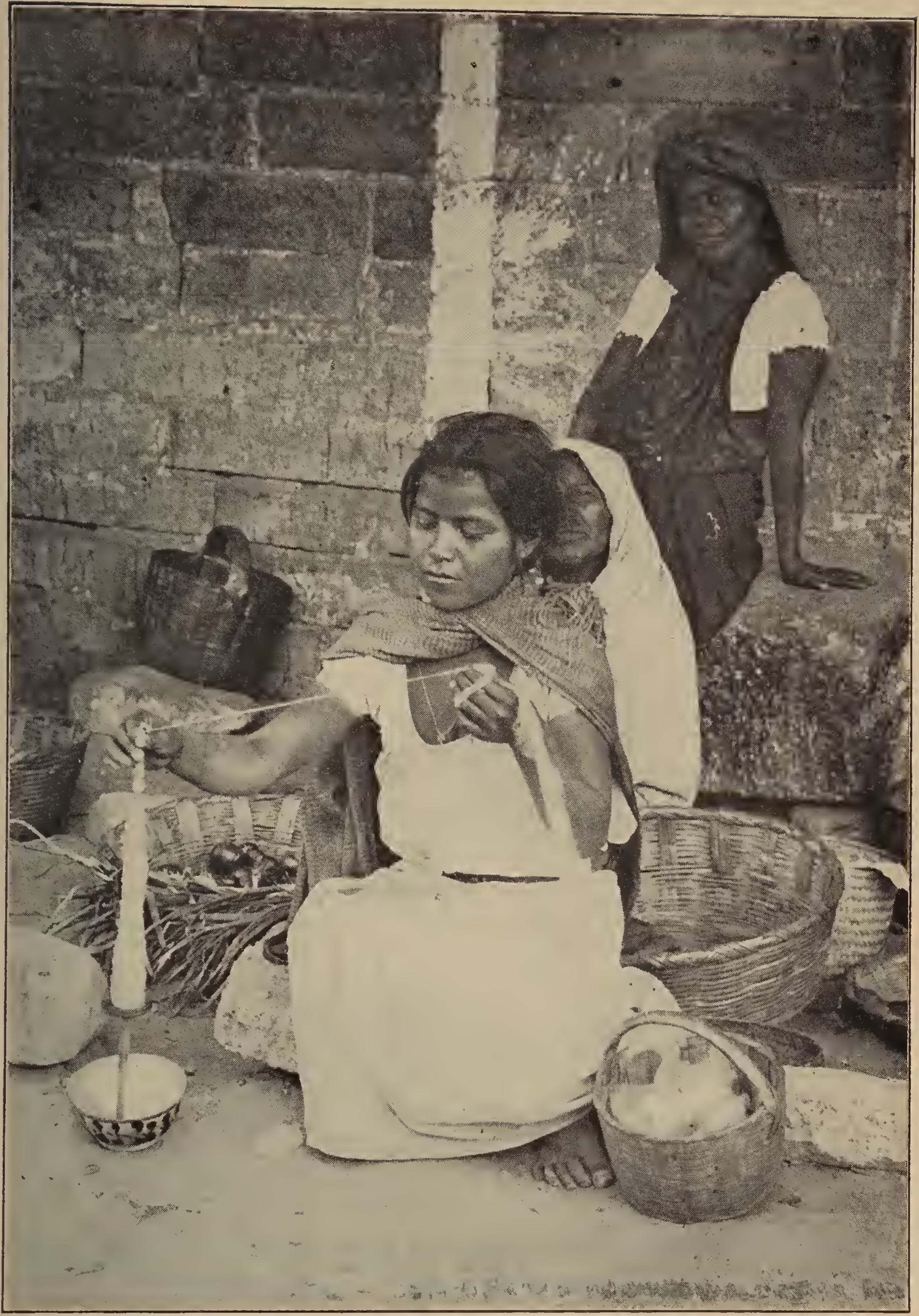
This calendar stone gives some idea of the advanced civilization of the Aztecs. It was used as a sun dial and calendar, and the hieroglyphs upon it represent the years, months, and days. The archaeologists disagree as to the exact meaning of some of the symbols, but certain figures show that the priests knew how to adjust their festivals by the movements of the heavenly bodies. They were able to fix the length of the year even better than the philosophers of antiquity, and they had means of marking with precision the hours of the day and the times of the solstices and equinoxes.

The stone originally weighed about fifty tons and the records prove that it came from over the mountains, a distance of many leagues. The Aztecs had neither horses nor oxen, so it must have been carried by men. The Mexican twenty-dollar gold piece now has the design of the calendar stone stamped on it.

Other exhibits in the museum show that these ancient Indians had a higher degree of civilization than is generally supposed. They had their own literature, most of which was destroyed by the Spaniards. They used picture-writings and much of their traditional and scientific lore was committed to manuscript. In their system of writing, each character represented an idea. Moreover, there was a colour scheme whereby a figure in black meant one thing, while the same symbol in blue meant another. Thus a white disk stood for the rising sun, a black disk for the setting sun, a disk half white and half black for midday. A tongue meant speaking; a foot, travelling; a man sitting down, an earthquake. The serpent stood for time, perhaps because time slips so noiselessly away.

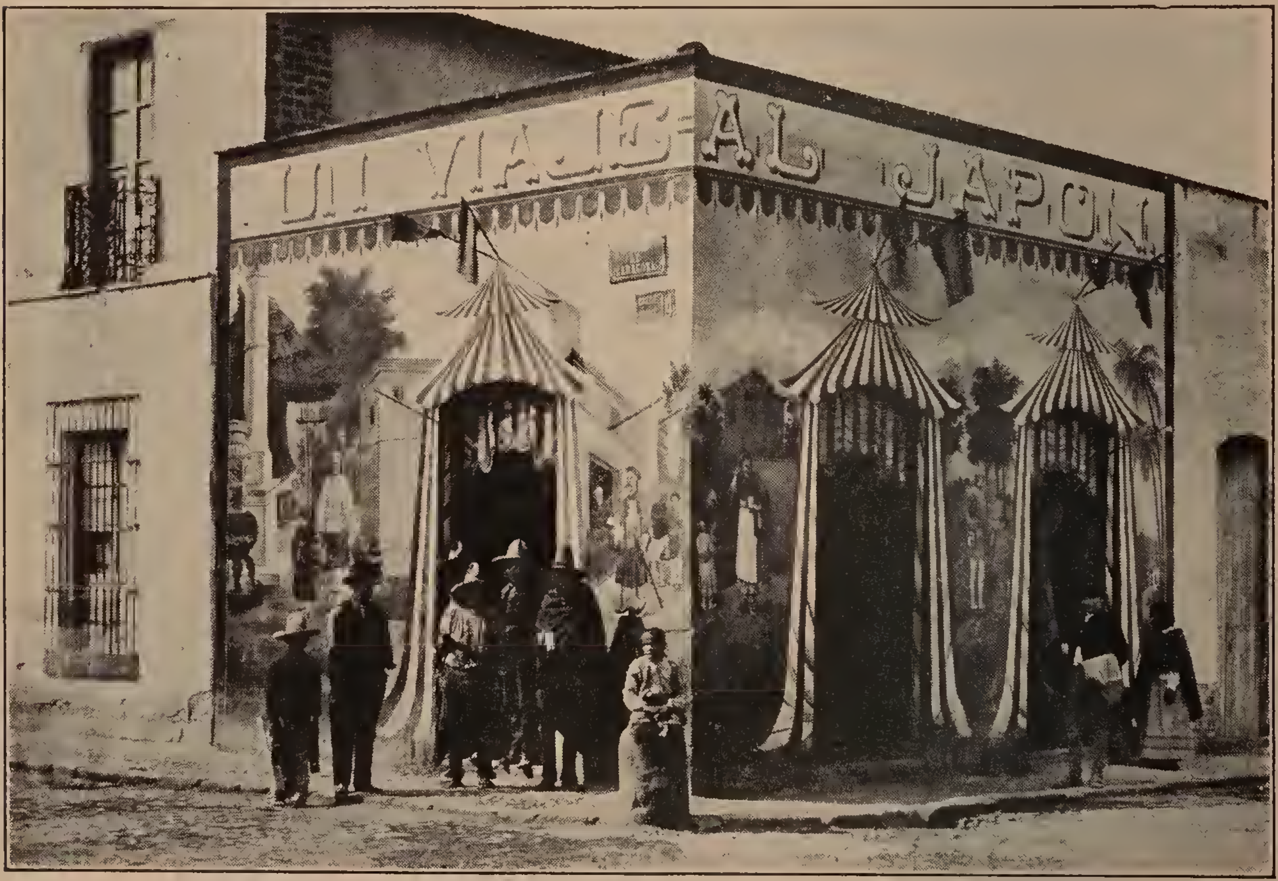
It was part of the religious fanaticism of the Spaniards that they wished to destroy all the records and symbols of the pagan race they had conquered. One priest made a great collection of these early picture-writings just to have the pleasure of burning them up. At last this intolerance spent itself and then the Spanish priests began gathering and translating whatever manuscripts they could find.

The Aztecs knew how to make paper, and they used cotton clothing. They made dyes like the Tyrian purple and cloth of the fur of rabbits. They had fairs for the encouragement of trade and agriculture, and were expert workers in metal. Some of the articles carried to



When the Spaniards came the Aztecs were spinning and weaving much as the Mexican Indians do to-day, although such handicrafts are dying out. Cortes said the fine cottons woven for the rich reminded him of the beautiful fabrics of Salamanca.

Business men in Mexico City entertain their friends at the Country Club, built by the Americans at a cost of $350,000. It has a fine golf course and many Mexicans have taken up the game.



The old-fashioned Mexican merchant uses some fancy name rather than his own over his store. "A Trip to Japan," with its painted walls, its flags, and its tissue-paper decorations, is a typical pulque shop.

Spain by Cortes were vessels of gold, silver, and copper, among them some silver basins so big that they could not be encircled by the arms of a man.

The archives tell how the Aztec nobles ate at tables set with silver and gold plates and had chafing dishes to keep their meats warm. They had napkins and finger bowls and smoked cigarettes after dinner. They had good cooks and ate all kinds of vegetables, fruits, and meats. Montezuma had fish from the ocean brought to him by fast runners over the mountains, a distance of more than two hundred miles, and the Spanish historians say that the markets of the capital contained domestic poultry, game from the forests, fish from the lakes, and fruits of the temperate and tropical zones. The stalls in the market were decorated with flowers, and the throng there usually numbered about forty thousand. Cortes says the multitude was three times as great as that of the market at Salamanca, and also that the Aztec cloths and tapestry made him think of the silks of Granada.

One part of the market was assigned to the goldsmiths, another to toy peddlers, and other sections to pottery workers and the sellers of copper and obsidian, of which the razors and mirrors were made. There were also drug shops, and stores selling blank books and charts.

Yet there are now millions of the descendants of these people who cannot read or write. They are mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and their future is one of the big problems in Mexico. There is no doubt, however, that they have natural ability, for the greatest men of modern Mexico have had more or less Indian blood in their veins. President Juarez was an Indian, and President Diaz had Indian ancestors.

Some of the ancient emperors wrote poetry and philosophy, and there is one Nexahualcoyatl, whose utterances made one think of the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, or the proverbs of Solomon. This man was a Toltec. He belonged to the tribe that preceded the Aztecs in power, and during his reign he revolutionized the laws and government of Mexico. Here is a quotation from one of his poems which has been translated into Spanish and then into English. It suggests the verse in Ecclesiastes:

> Then I commended Mirth; because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, drink and to be merry.

This is the way the ancient Toltec puts it:

> Banish care! If there are bounds to pleasure, the saddest life must also have an end. Then weave the chaplet of flowers, sing thy songs in the praise of the all-powerful God, for the glory of the world soon fadeth! Rejoice in the green freshness of the spring, for the day will come when thou shalt sigh for these joys in vain; when the sceptre shall pass from thy hand and the sons of thy nobles drink the dregs of distress. Yet the remembrance of the just shall not pass away from the nations and the good thou hast done shall ever be held in honour. The goods of this life, its glories and riches, are but lent to us. Its substance is but an illusory shadow, and the things of to-day shall change on the morrow. Then gather the flowers from thy gardens to bind round thy brows and seize the joys of to-day.

Nexahualcoyatl, like the Athenians of the time of St. Paul, erected a temple to the unknown god. He was a sort of Mexican David, and was like Solomon in that he loved beautiful women. He coveted the wife of one of his officers, and, even as David did to Uriah, he put this officer in the forefront of the battle and then took his widow to wife. Is it not strange how the lines of great lives, even though they be divided by ages of time, by thousands of miles of water and land, and even by worlds unknown one to the other, sometimes follow the same course?

The story of Nexahualcoyatl's splendid palaces and manner of living reads like a page from the "Arabian Nights." The principal residence of this king covered seventy-seven acres. In it were salons for scientists and poets, and he kept here the archives of the kingdom. His private apartments were hung with tapestry and cloth made of feathers. Its walls were of alabaster, and it had luxurious baths and gardens filled with flowers. Its ponds were stocked with fish, and there were aviaries containing the most gorgeous birds of Mexico and the South. It had three hundred rooms, some of them more than one hundred feet square. It took, it is said, two hundred thousand men to build this palace. In addition, the king had a number of country seats which had as many curious conceits as those of an American millionaire's palace of to-day. With his fine cooks, his literary labours, his professional dancers, and his hunting reserves, he seems to have led a happier life than many a monarch of modern times.

I close this chapter with what this ancient philosopher of the New World had to say about death:

> The world is nothing but a sepulchre, and there is nothing that lives on its surface that shall not be beneath it. The things of yesterday are no more to-day, and the things of to-day shall cease, perhaps, on the morrow. The glories that have been, have all passed away like the fearful smoke that issues from the throat of Popocatapetl, with no other existence of a record than the page of a chronicler. The great, the wise, the valiant, and the beautiful! Alas, where are they now? That which has befallen them shall happen to us and to those that come after us. The horrors of the tomb are but the cradle of the sun and the dark shadows of death make only more brilliant the light of the stars.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME MATTERS OF BUSINESS

IT IS two o'clock in the afternoon and we are on the Avenida de Francisco I. Madero in the heart of the capital of Mexico. In Washington, Berlin, Paris, and London it is the busiest hour of the day. Here the streets are deserted, the stores are closed, and their show windows are covered with shutters of corrugated iron. The front doors of the chief business establishments are locked with great bolts, and the town makes one think of the dead city of Nijni-Novgorod on the Volga when the fair is not going on.

What is the matter?

Has revolution again broken loose and have the people fled for their lives?

Nothing of the kind. These are the business conditions at two o'clock every week day all the year round. The stores, which have been open from eight until one, will open again from three until seven. They are closed now for lunch, and the whole city, merchants and clerks, salesmen and customers, have gone home for their midday meal and siesta.

Stand with me on the corner and look up the street. An hour ago it was black with people, and the automobiles and carriages flew back and forth so that one crossed at the risk of his life. Now hardly a car or a coach is to be seen and the only men in sight are the policemen who walk back and forth.

Let us go down to the Plaza and wait till the street cars bring the people back from their homes. The Plaza is the centre to which nearly every electric line comes. At the rush hours the cars are run in trains, a dozen often being nose to tail on the same track. The midday traffic makes up a big part of the receipts, for nearly everyone goes home to lunch.

But it is now three thirty p.m. The cars have emptied the clerks and customers into the stores, and once more business is well under way. Let us cross the Plaza and stroll through the arcades along its west side. The shops have goods of many descriptions behind their glass windows. The most interesting are those selling hats. They contain headgear of all sorts, from the latest men's shapes from New York and London to the gigantic sombreros of plush and felt that the old-time Mexicans wear.

Stop and look at some of them. Here is one as big around as a limousine tire. It is of bright red, trimmed with silver, and the band consists of eight strands of silver wire. The hat hanging above it is gray, appliquéd with leather, and at the right and the left are two sombreros of black, laced back and forth with great bands of silver. There are hats as green as the wing of that parrot which the peddler has thrust under our eyes, and hats of plush snow-white with golden embroidery woven about them. Put on one of these sombreros and wrap yourself in a blanket and I will take your photograph to show you how you look in Mexican costume. I can tell you that your hat weighs several pounds and is worth forty dollars.

Other clothing costs almost as much. We go into a tailor shop farther up the street, and look at some riding trousers of buckskin with solid silver buttons lining the seams. One pair costs twenty dollars, and that short roundabout jacket embroidered with silver is likewise expensive. We enter a shop next door which has saddles and bridles with trappings of silver, and are told that a *hacendado* often spends several hundred dollars on his equestrian outfit.

Now look up at the sign over the store in front of which we are standing. You may think those letters spell "Hats and Sombreros." They do not. They read: "*Puerto del Sol,*" or "Gate of the Sun." A little farther on is a barber sign, "*La Perla,*" or "The Pearl," and over the way a tobacconist sells cigars and cigarettes under the sign of "The White Cat." Some stores have such names as "Vesuvius," "The Violets," "The Pearl of the Occident," "The White Rose," "*La Perfumista,*" and "The Drinking Place to Hidalgo." The old-fashioned Mexican never puts his own name over his store, but like the Chinese, chooses instead some fancy title that gives no indication of who he is or what he is selling.

Some of the street names are quite as picturesque as these signs. For example, there is one called the "Love of God," another is the "Lost Child Street," yet another is the "Sad Indian Street," while a very narrow thoroughfare says to the visitor "Pass If You Can." The "Coffin-Makers' Street" is given over to that brotherhood. The shops of a Mexican city are often grouped according to business or the goods sold. In the market district one side of a street may be lined with hat stores while the other is given up to candy-sellers. Some of the streets have sidewalks so narrow that two people cannot pass on them, and when the peon meets a man of a higher degree, the peon steps into the gutter. If two gentlemen meet there is often much bowing and scraping as to which one shall yield the way.

There are cigar stores everywhere. From the lately weaned baby to the gray-haired old grown-up on the edge of the grave, nearly everyone in Mexico smokes cigars or cigarettes. This is true of both men and women. The country produces excellent tobacco, and cigars and cigarettes are sold cheaper here than at home. The cigarettes rolled in black paper look deadly, but the tobacco in them is mild and they are said to be good.

The customers inside the native shops are as strange as the signs. Only the department stores and large shops have any fixed prices, and one is usually asked three times what the merchant expects. This applies especially to foreigners, whom the clerks are often allowed to charge what they please, receiving a percentage of all they can get over the regular price. Mexican merchants permit their employees to smoke while waiting on customers, and sometimes the clerks seem more interested in their cigarettes than in their sales.

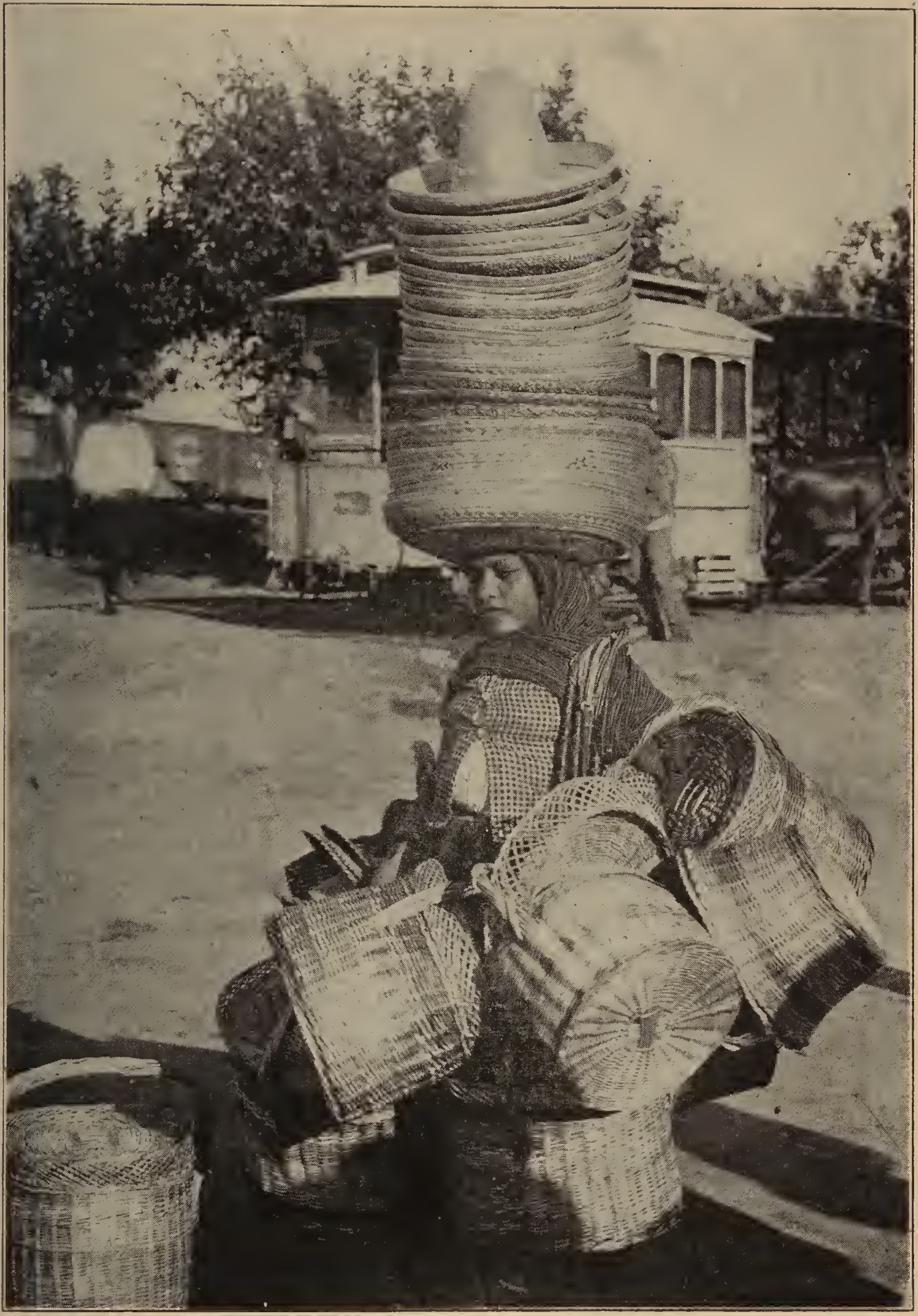
The Mexican business men have their own ways of doing things, which sometimes seem foolish to us; but they generally succeed and often grow wealthy. The percentage of failures has for years been lower than in the United States. Our motto is usually: "Quick sales and small profits," but the merchant of Mexico is more likely to insist on "big profits," no matter how slow the turnover. He holds his goods until he gets his price and bargain days are uncommon. He buys as much as he can on as long time as possible. His own sales are largely for cash, but he will hold out for long credits in placing his orders, no matter how much money he may have lying idle. I have found many who say that the Mexican merchant is apt to be sharp in his dealings but none who accuses him of not paying his bills.

Mexico is one of Uncle Sam's most valuable customers and she buys more from us than from any other nation. Every year more than half of the goods she imports come from the United States, while we take from Mexico about eighty per cent. of her exports. This has not always been so, as prior to the great inflow of American capital the European countries used to get the bulk of the trade. Germans and Frenchmen still have a large share of the big business, but American goods form the greater part of the annual turnover.

An American of long residence in Mexico was speaking to-day about the sale of our goods. Said he:

"I am sick and tired of all this talk about Americans not knowing how to do business with Mexico and of how they are beaten by the British, the French, and the Germans. The truth is our people are selling more here than all of the other nations put together. Americans have come into Mexico by the tens of thousands, following in the trail of our enormous investments. They have sent home for goods of all kinds and thus showed the Mexicans what the United States has to offer.

"They have equipped the mines, the oil wells, and many big ranches with our machinery, tools, and supplies, and have brought down from the States countless other articles we use at home. When the Mexican sees the American article is superior to his, he loses no time in adopting it. The European merchants prefer to sell goods from their own



The best city shops sell enormous felt hats, heavy with silver spangles and braid and costing forty dollars or more, but the cheap straws worn by the peons are sold by street peddlers all over the country.

Women and children do most of the church-going in Mexico, though the people are devout and support an immense number of places of worship. Usually the church doors are kept open all day.

countries, but unless they are willing to let someone else have the business they are forced to supply the United States goods which their customers want.

"I remember some years ago meeting a bright young man sent down to Tampico by the United States government. He was greatly disturbed to find the Germans had all the hardware business, which, on account of the purchases of the oil companies, runs into big figures. I undertook to prove to him that Europeans might be doing the selling but that their goods came from American factories, and took him to call on the biggest German firm in the city. You have seen the machetes, or long knives, the peon's universal weapon and tool. I offered to buy every machete in the establishment not from the States. We looked over the stock, and all were made in Connecticut. Asking for small tools, we found that all bore the name of a firm in Massachusetts. This store sells pipe by the mile to the oil companies, but the owner admitted that it all comes from the States.

"At this point the trade investigator asked if the firm sold any mouse traps and found that the whole stock on hand came from St. Louis, where he lived, and from the very factory he had in mind. About the only German goods in this German store were pieces of cheap, imitation silverware.

"What is true of machetes and mouse traps is equally true of other lines. The Frenchmen, who control much of the business in men's furnishings, carry collars and garters manufactured in the United States, while most well-to-do Mexicans wear American shoes. The native ox-cart is being replaced by wagons from the Mississippi Valley and motor trucks from Detroit, and American cars are taking the place of the French and the Italian automobiles which the fashionables of Mexico City formerly bought."

The Mexican takes more time for his business than we do, and he always has time to be polite. He usually shakes hands and inquires for the health of the merchant's family before proceeding to buy or to sell. The American sales letter, so esteemed in some of our commercial houses, horrifies him. He is so punctilious and formal that he often uses in place of our "Yours truly" the initials S.S.S.Q.B.S.M. They stand for: "*Su seguro servidor, que besa su mano*," which literally translated is, "Your faithful servant, who kisses your hand."

There are now many American business establishments in the Mexican capital, and most of them have fixed prices marked in plain figures. Among the finest are the jewellery stores. They are filled with gold and silver trinkets from Paris and with precious stones of all kinds. I find them in almost every block, and along the Avenida de Francisco I. Madero some which would be a credit to NewYork or Chicago. There are also American groceries, dry goods stores, and hardware houses.

The curio shops are interesting. They sell Mexican drawn-work, stamped-leather pocketbooks, mantillas and laces, and Spanish fans. The gorgeous serapes, or Mexican blankets, are always displayed, but one should be careful to get the real thing, and not one poorly dyed or mixed with horsehair, "made in Germany." The best serapes are woven throughout of good Mexican wool, and coloured with brilliant vegetable dyes.

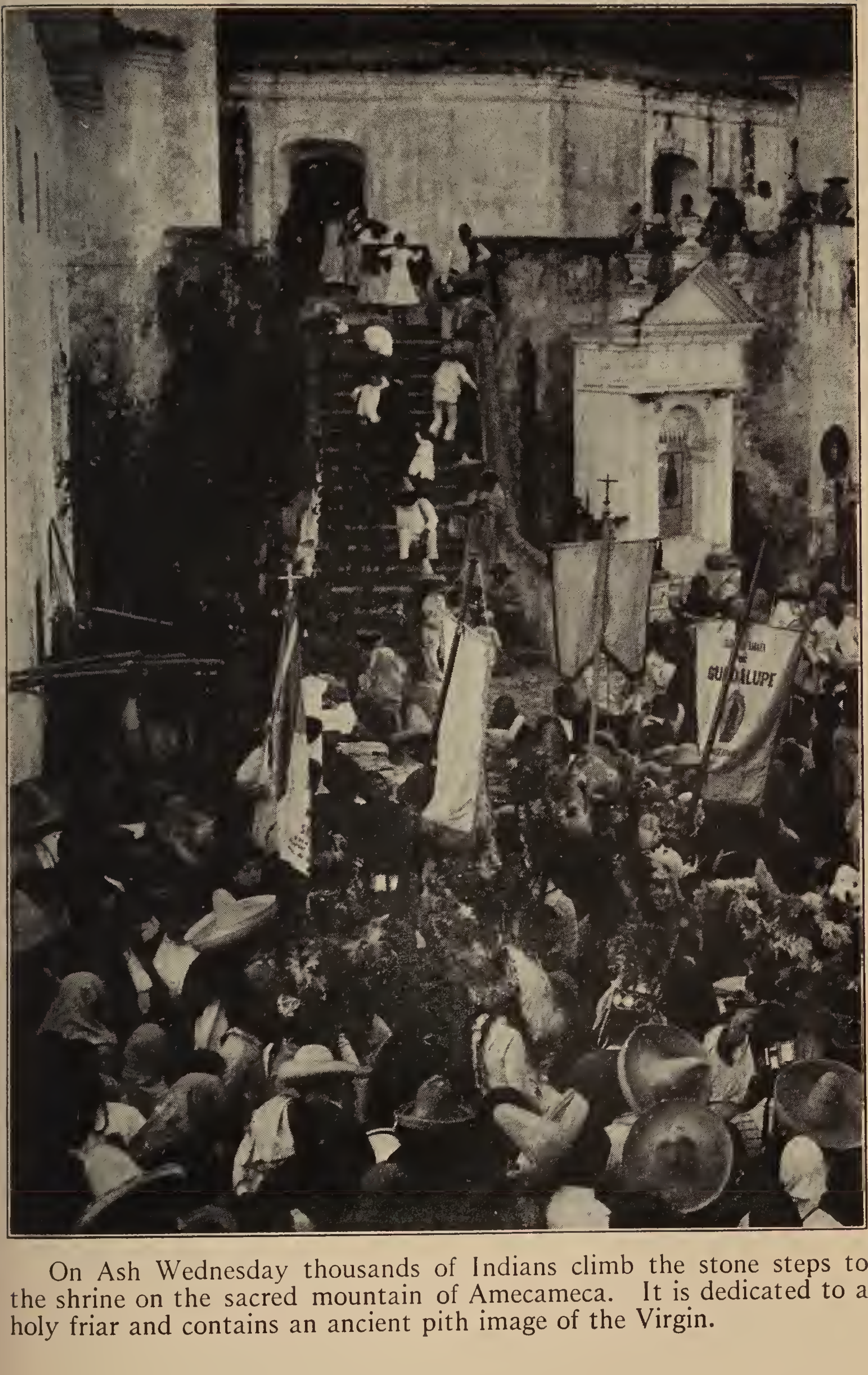
Nearly every curio dealer has a half peck or so of opals, which he sells by the piece or the handful, according to quality. Some of the stones are beautiful, and an especially fine one will bring one hundred dollars and upward. Others which may reflect all the colours of the rainbow are bunched together and sold at a few dollars a pint. The reputable dealers sell only "seasoned stones," or those that have been tested for flaws. But there are many tricks in this opal trade. The peddler at the railroad station may substitute a poor stone for a good one just as the train pulls out. Soft opals are easily scratched, so that they become dull and lifeless. The sharper sometimes soaks a cracked opal in oil, which fills in the crevices and makes the stone appear perfect until it dries out. The best are the fire opals, which are also called "precious opals," on account of the variety and the beauty of their colouring.

As to the nationality of the men who are doing the retail business here, Americans own most of the stores selling curios, the French have the fine dry goods business, and the Germans sell most of the hardware and drugs. As a rule the German merchants speak Spanish and not a few of them have Mexican wives. The Spaniards hold somewhat the same place that the Italians do in the United States. They have the corner groceries, and they also peddle goods all over the country. Some of them stay only a short time, and then go back to Spain to spend what they have made.

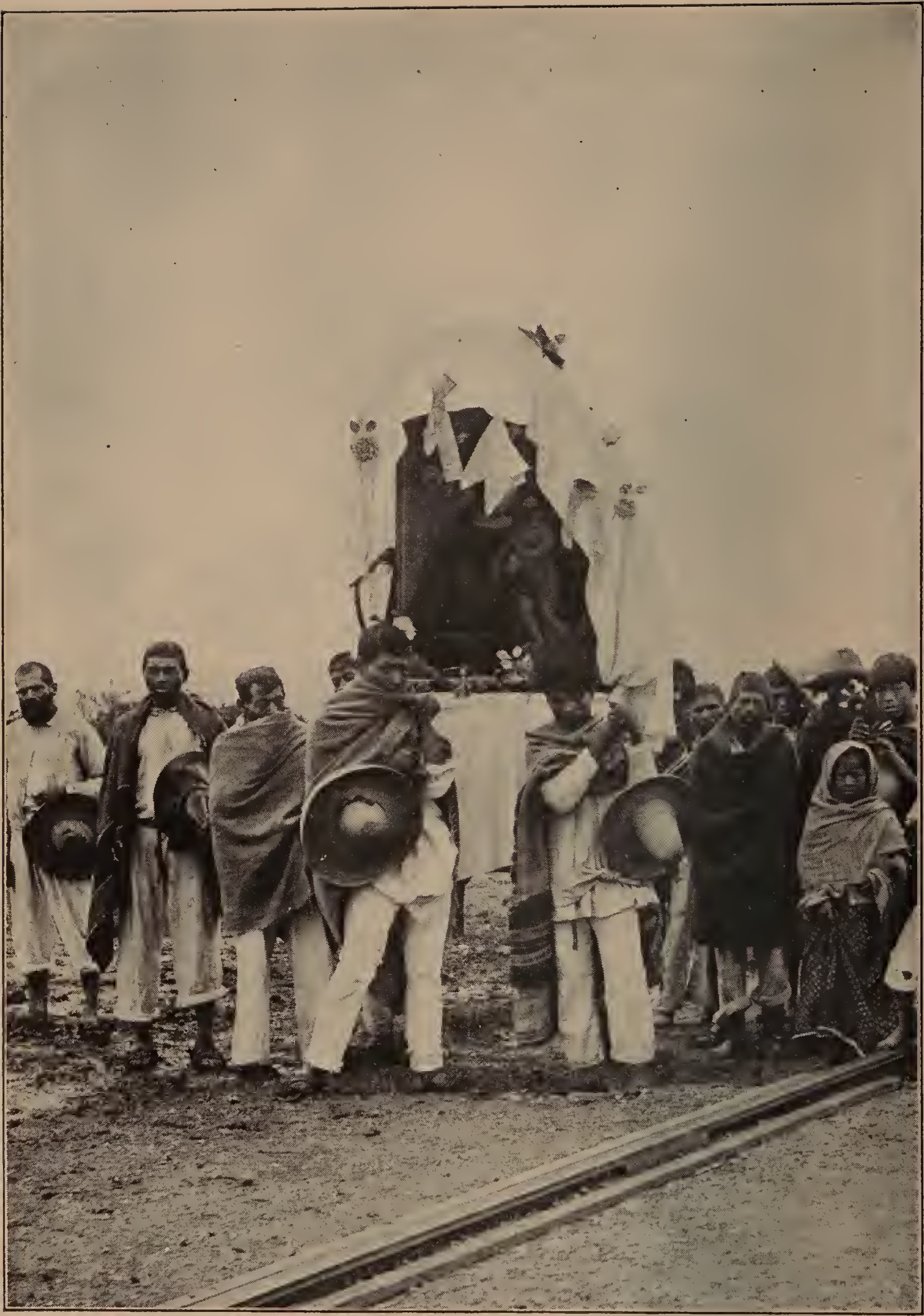
Nine tenths of the business of the country is done in small shops and by Mexicans, although the west coast towns have many Chinese retailers. Every city has hundreds of peddlers in its markets and about the market-houses one will find booths selling fancy work, pottery, shoes, cheap dry goods, and fancy gimcracks.

A business that flourishes continually is the sale of lottery tickets. Every time I go outside my hotel I meet a lottery-ticket peddler. He is a native, six feet tall and broad in proportion. Over his shoulders he has a bright-coloured blanket and on his head a sombrero as big as an umbrella. He wears also a red shirt and trousers and a brown jacket gaily embroidered. This representative of Dame Fortune walks up and down Sixteenth of September Street all day long and begs one to buy. There are many lottery-ticket sellers about the Cathedral and also at the entrance to the ring of the Plaza de Toros.

Beggars are common throughout the Republic, and they are especially bothersome in Mexico City. Their whining voices are everywhere heard, but they can always be turned away with the words, "*Perdóneme por Dios*," or "Pardon me in the name of God." Sometimes children are taught to beg from their earliest years and are compelled to give up whatever they may get to their parents who often spend it in the nearest *pulquería*. Clothing is generally pawned, for the average begger would rather do without clothes than lack cigarettes or drink.



On Ash Wednesday thousands of Indians climb the stone steps to the shrine on the sacred mountain of Amecameca. It is dedicated to a holy friar and contains an ancient pith image of the Virgin.



Just after planting-time some Indians carry images of the Madonna out to bless the coming crops. In remote country districts the priest blesses bagfuls of worms so that when returned to the soil they may spread a "Christian" influence among their fellows.

CHAPTER XVIII

HANGING JUDAS ISCARIOT

EASTER is the gayest day of the year in Mexico. The streets of the capital are alive with colour, there is a great bull-fight in the Plaza de Toros, the theatres are open for matinée and evening performances, and Judas Iscariot is hanged again and again in all parts of the city. This hanging of Judas is a custom observed throughout the country. It was originated to give the Indian converts to Christianity a chance to vent their rage upon the traitor to Christ. In the cities it has now become a mere show for the children.

Here at the Mexican capital images of Judas, made in all shapes and sizes, are peddled about the streets in advance of the celebration. They range in price from a few cents to a number of dollars, the larger ones being often filled with firecrackers and other explosives, which go off and blow Judas to pieces. Some bear such mottoes as: "I am the Devil's son. Blow me to Hell."

These big Judas figures, which are made as ugly as possible, have ropes attached to them and are dragged about the streets. They are knocked about this way and that until their owners think they have sufficiently shown their disgust and contempt, and then they are taken up and hanged. Sometimes a rope is stretched across the street, from the second-story windows of the houses, in such a way that Judas hangs from the middle, or a flag staff is put out with Judas dangling at the end of it. Both children and grown-ups mob the effigy, throwing stones at it or pelting it with mud.

Some of the figures are stuffed with candies and presents for the children, but in such cases they are usually hung inside the patios of the houses, where the little ones can keep the sweets for themselves. There are also merchants who advertise by hanging above their stores Judases filled with firecrackers and trashy articles of one kind or other. When the firecrackers explode, the contents of the figures are scattered over the sidewalk and the crowd scrambles for them.

Easter Sunday is very popular here on account of the rigid way in which the Mexicans observe Lent. During that time all festivities are prohibited. The Church will not celebrate the sacrament of marriage, and many of the women put off their fine clothes and wear only black. Even the churches are draped in black and the gorgeous altars have sable mantles over their beautiful decorations of gold, silver, and lace. Every good Christian is supposed to go to church, and all of the women and the Indians do so. The church bells ring from morning till night, and have awakened me before daybreak by their din.

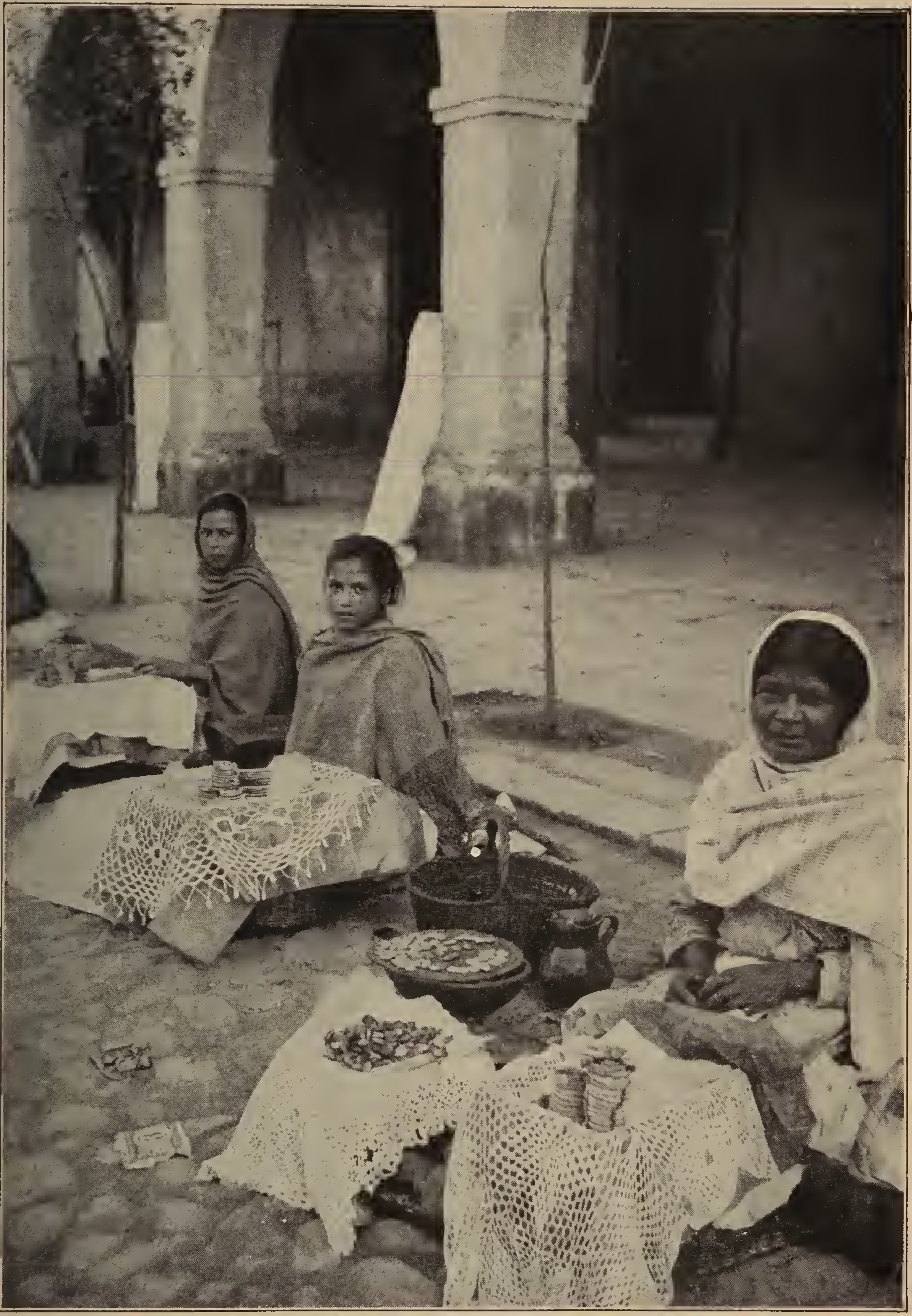
This continues until Palm Sunday, when the Indians bring in palms by the thousand and crosses woven of palms are everywhere sold. Some of these crosses are from six to ten feet in length and some are so small that I can hold them in the hollow of my hand. Some are not more than two inches wide, being made of the finest fibres of palm. Others are of the whole leaves, and often a single large palm cross will sell for five dollars. These palms are blessed by the priests and are carried home to be tied to the front balconies, there to remain until the next Palm Sunday.

Good Friday has its own special services, and in the afternoon and evening of that day the churches are dark and the worshippers engage in silent prayer. The last of the ceremonies come on Saturday at noon, when the choirs sing the "Gloria" to organ accompaniments. At the same time the black draperies are stripped from the altars and the bells are rung. After this the gaieties commence.

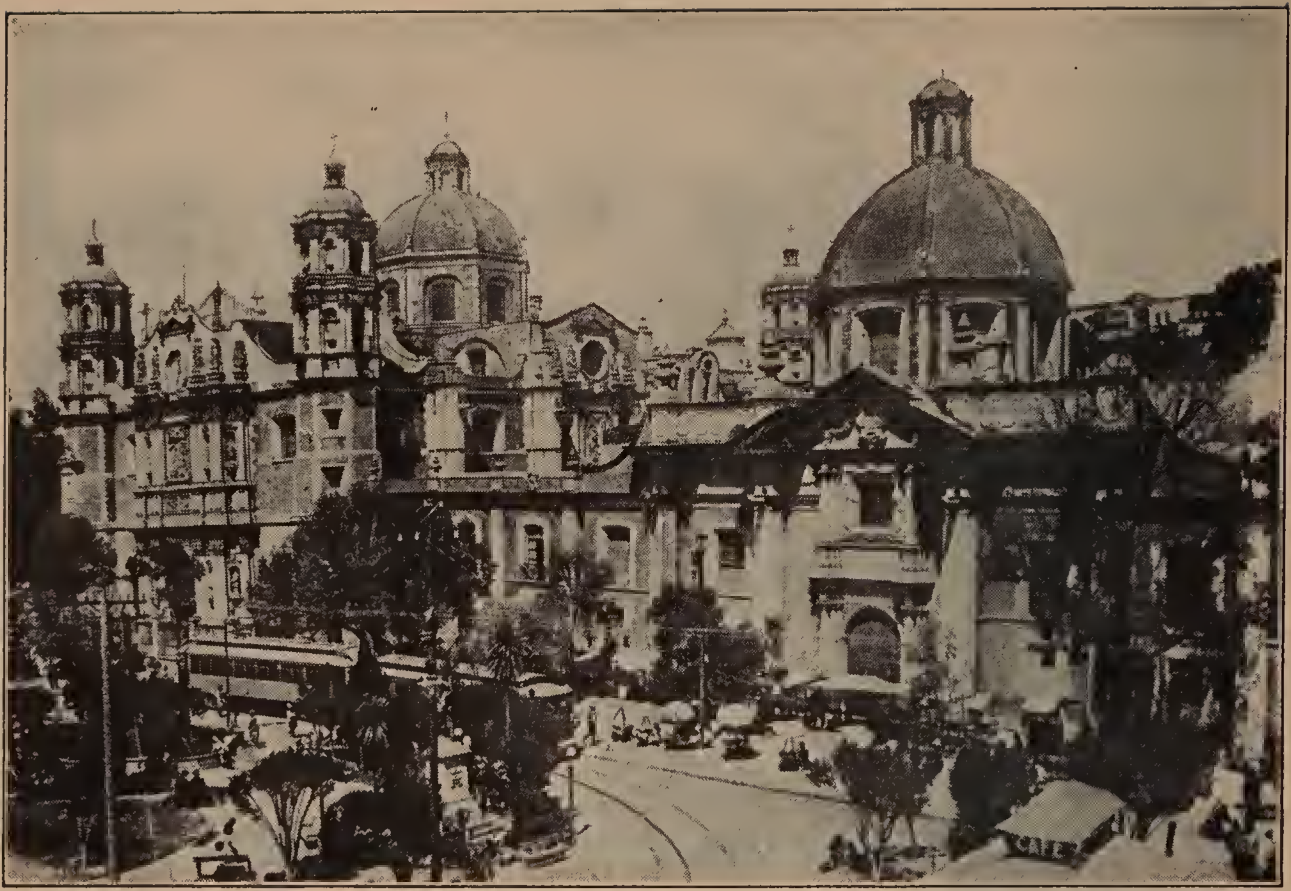
The superstitions of the Indians, which led them to have fantastic dances and shows during Lent and at Easter time have been discouraged. One of the strangest of these shows was the Passion Play, which used to be given with great feeling all over the country. The Mexicans called it the Three Falls of Christ, and it represented the stations of the cross on the way to the Crucifixion. A figure of the Christ, robed in red velvet and gaudy with gold lace, was taken in a car through the streets and at intervals made to fall on its face. These stops were the signals for harangues from the priest. In the car with the figure was a real live Mexican Indian bearing a heavy cross and taking the part of Simon of Cyrene. His costume usually consisted of red cotton coat and trousers, set off with white lace at cuffs, collar, and vest, and completed by a flat red turban and white lace pantalettes. After the "three falls" the figure of the Christ was crucified. In the early days of this Passion Play Indians took the part of Christ, but as their hands and feet were often actually pierced with nails, sometimes with fatal results, the use of figures was substituted.

It is not long since many of the churches had a ceremony of washing the feet of beggars. This occurred on Holy Thursday, when twelve of the oldest beggars of the parish were given seats near the church altar. An attendant then brought water in a basin, and the priest, taking off the sandals of the beggars, cleansed their feet. After this he anointed them with oil, and then turned them loose to go on with their begging. This ceremony was very like the washing of the feet of the Twelve Apostles, celebrated by the Greek Church every Easter in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. I have seen the latter ceremony, but in that case the Greek Patriarch did the washing and it was the feet of bishops and not those of beggars that were washed.

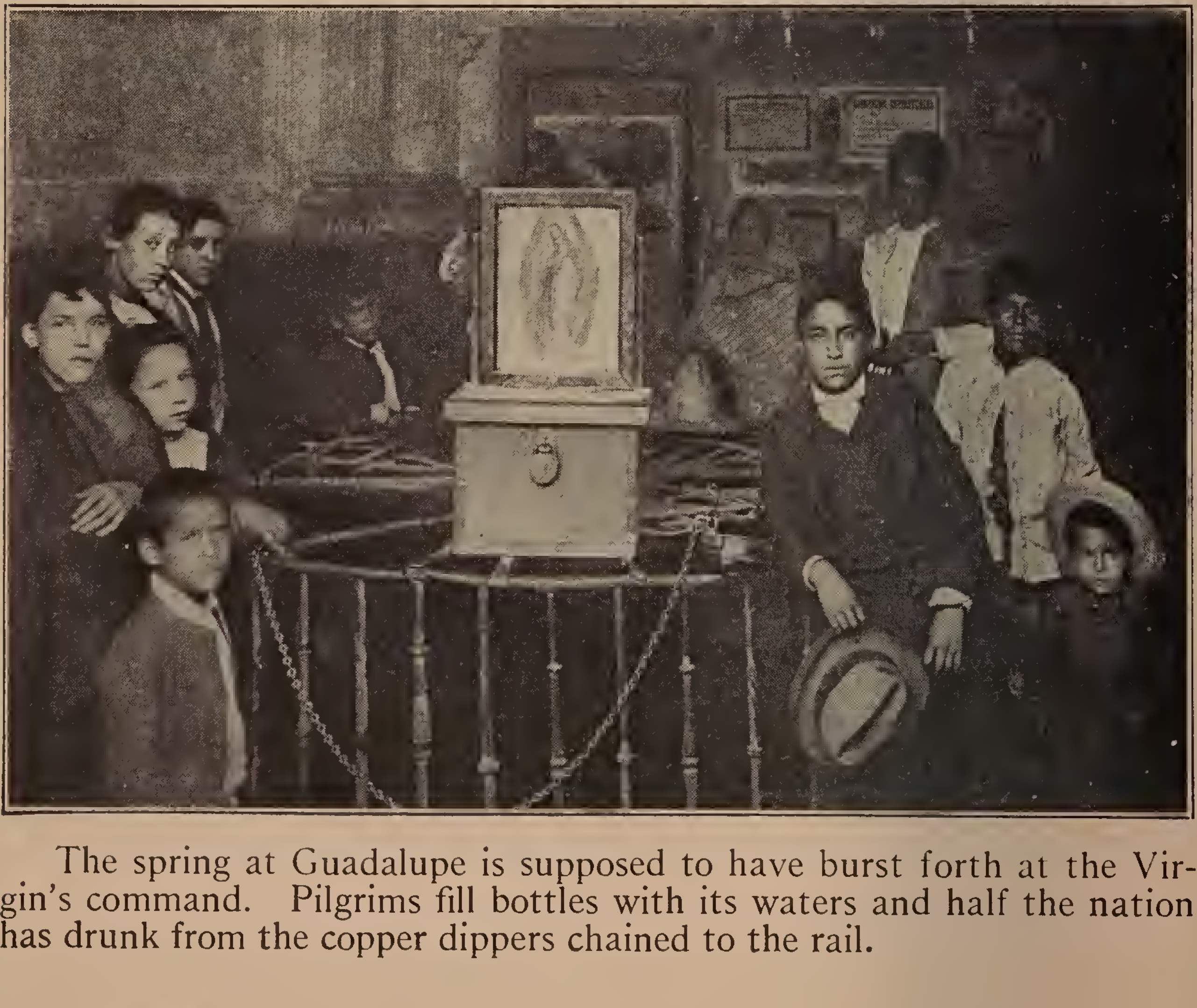
I doubt whether there are any people more superstitious or more devout than the Mexican masses. The Indians here were converted wholesale at the time of the Conquest, and their religion of to-day is still mixed with the superstitions of the Aztecs.



Many pilgrims to Guadalupe, the most popular shrine in all Mexico, pay their expenses by cooking and selling tiny cakes, called "little fat ones of the Virgin." The Indians eat these cakes in huge quantities.



The church of Guadalupe enshrines a picture of the Virgin which appeared miraculously on an Indian's blanket. The church is built on the spot where she came to the peon and commanded that a temple be built here in her honour.



The spring at Guadalupe is supposed to have burst forth at the Virgin's command. Pilgrims fill bottles with its waters and half the nation has drunk from the copper dippers chained to the rail.

CHAPTER XIX

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

ONE of the best places to see how earnest the Indians are in their worship is at the Shrine of Guadalupe, situated about three miles from the Cathedral of Mexico City and accessible by street cars. I have spent several days in moving about among the thousands of Indians who come there to worship.

The shrine was built because of a miracle, said to have been performed there by the Virgin Mary about four hundred years ago. One bright December morning when Juan Diego, a poor Indian peasant, was on his way to worship at a church farther on, he crossed the rocky, arid hill where the shrine now stands. As he reached it he was confronted by a beautiful woman who told him that she was the Blessed Virgin and that she wished the Mexican people to build a church on the spot where she stood. Juan was commanded to report this to the bishop. He did so, but was disbelieved.

The next day he came again, and again the Virgin met him and called him her son and repeated her wish to have the church built. She then said that she would give him a sign to convince the bishop that he was telling the truth. She bade him go to the top of the hill and bring back an armful of the roses he would find growing there. Juan knew that the hill was a rocky desert, covered only with cactus, but he went, and lo, the hilltop was a bed of beautiful flowers! He took the blanket, or *tilma*, from his shoulders and filled it with blossoms. As the Virgin directed, he carried them to the bishop and repeated his story, spreading the flowers out on the ground. At the same time he held up his mantle, and behold, the portrait of the Virgin appeared painted upon it.

It was then known that a miracle had been performed and the news went far and wide. The bishop ordered that a chapel be built and in it was placed the holy picture. The miraculous painting is now enshrined in a gold-and-silver frame in the high altar of marble and bronze in the great stone church. The *tilma* is a coarse-fibre cloth on which much of the colouring of the picture remains. The blue robe and the pink skirt of the Virgin are especially well preserved.

On Coronation Day and on December 12th is exhibited the great golden crown of the Virgin of Guadalupe. It is encrusted with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, and was subscribed by the women of Mexico from their own jewels. At other times the crown is kept in a steel safe, but a tip to the sacristan gave me a view of it. It weighs thirty pounds and is nearly three feet in diameter.

Every peasant knows of this shrine, and the pilgrims come by the hundreds of thousands to visit it, particularly on the great feast day of December 12th. The railroad officials tell me that the travel to it materially increases the receipts of the roads, and that it is a traffic asset worth several hundred thousand dollars a year.

I wish you could see the Indians as they crawl up the hill on their knees to visit the place where Juan found the roses Halfway up are the Stone Sails of Guadalupe.

More than two centuries ago some sailors caught in a storm prayed to the Virgin, promising that if they came out alive they would carry the foremast and sails of their ship to this hill. After their safe landing they took their rigging on their shoulders from Vera Cruz to Guadalupe, where they set it up, building around it for protection against the weather the covering of stone which still stands.

Next to the church itself, the most celebrated place in Mexico is the Chapel of the Well near by. Here, below the pavement, is a spring of sulphur which boils and bubbles within its walls of wet stone. The waters, believed to have sprung up on the place where the Virgin stood, contain sulphur, magnesia, and potash. They smell like venerable eggs. There is a grating over the well, and upon it are copper dippers fastened to chains, which the pilgrims let down to draw up the water. There are no individual cups and year after year processions of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims drink from the same old dippers.

But suppose we go into the church. It is filled with Indians, girls and boys and women and men. All are on their knees and all hold candles, the flames of which make a smoke so thick that it half hides the altar. These are bought by the worshippers from the dozens of peddlers outside, who sell rosaries as well. The candles are of all sizes from that of your finger to that of your leg, and range in price from ten cents to several dollars.

Some of the worshippers are gathered in knots down on the floor. They are kissing small squares of crystal glass containing saintly relics. Some even lay their babies on the glass, uttering pious exclamations as they do so. Many are seeking cures for their ailments, and in the church there are displayed on panels of black cloth, tiny silver feet, legs, and arms offered by pilgrims who have been made whole.

On all Sundays and feast days there are crowds in the church, but on the 12th of December both church and village are packed almost to suffocation. Then, it is said, forty thousand pilgrims visit Guadalupe, which is to these Indians what Mecca is to the Mohammedans, Nikko to the Japanese, or the Ganges to the Hindoos. Often the shriners come afoot, bringing along pottery, blankets, and home-made knick-knacks, which they sell on the road or in stands set up in the plaza before the church. Among the specialties are little biscuits made of a certain kind of large-grained corn and called "little fat ones of the Virgin."

A strange religious observance here in Mexico City is the "blessing of the animals" at the Church of Saint Anthony the Abbot in the midst of one of the poorest sections. On that Saint's feast day the churchyard is alive with goats, burros, parrots, sheep, pigs, and cows. All the animals are decorated with bright ribbons and papers and some are actually painted in all colours of the rainbow. Even old hens and geese appear with brilliant ribbons tied in bows about their necks. As the church bell sounds the priest appears. The people then rush forward with their pets and beasts of burden so as to get the drops of holy water and the blessing that will make their charges docile and "Christian" and keep them in good health throughout the rest of the year. In some of the country districts the priests bless bagfuls of worms, ants, and other enemies of the farmer so that when returned to the fields they may spread the right influence among their fellows and thus induce them to leave the crops alone.

CHAPTER XX

CHURCH AND STATE IN MEXICO

THE Mexican government now insists that there shall be an absolute separation of Church and State. It forbids church processions throughout the country. No one is allowed to wear clerical garb on the street, and here one does not see monks with tonsured heads, wearing sandals and long gowns, as in some other of the Latin American republics.

The great break between Church and State began before the time of President Juarez, but it was first put in force by him in 1857. At that time all the church property was confiscated and all the members of the religious societies, from the Jesuits to the Sisters of Charity, who taught in the schools and served as nurses in the hospitals, were sent out of the country. For a while even the ringing of the church bells was prohibited by law, and all religious parades outside the churches were forbidden.

Although the long gown and the clerical hat are not seen on the streets, one can readily tell the priests by their suits of black broadcloth, their high cravats, straight collars, and tall silk hats, while the nuns are easily known by their heads. As to the religious processions, they have been practically abolished.

Priests and even high dignitaries of the Church who have defied the law have frequently been arrested and sometimes expelled from the country. Recently even the

Pope's own special delegate was sent out of Mexico. He assisted in the ceremonies of laying the cornerstone of a statue of Christ on the summit of Mont Cubilete. In Mexico priests may not hold religious services of any kind in the open air or anywhere except in places of worship supervised by the authorities. On this occasion a tent was put up for the cornerstone laying, but this was viewed by the authorities as an attempt to get around the law. The clergy are also forbidden to criticize the fundamental laws or the authorities; they have no vote, are ineligible for political office, and cannot assemble for political purposes. No new church may be built without government permission. In Carranza's time the authorities removed from the churches the screens of the confessionals and the priests were forbidden to hear confessions in secret. Beautiful old hand-carved wooden screens were allowed to stand in the open for months. In some districts, where the local officials are less hostile to the clergy, they have not interfered with the priests in restoring the confessionals.

Although the Mexican government insists that the Roman Catholic shall not be the state church, the officials realize that it has a strong hold on the people and in times of stress the church dignitaries are often asked to help restore order. In one of the revolutionary disturbances the Secretary of the Interior asked that the Pope be requested to issue a peace decree, and in the Catholic churches throughout the country a special mass was said for divine intervention. At the same hour the papal father celebrated mass and joined in the prayers for the restoration of peace.

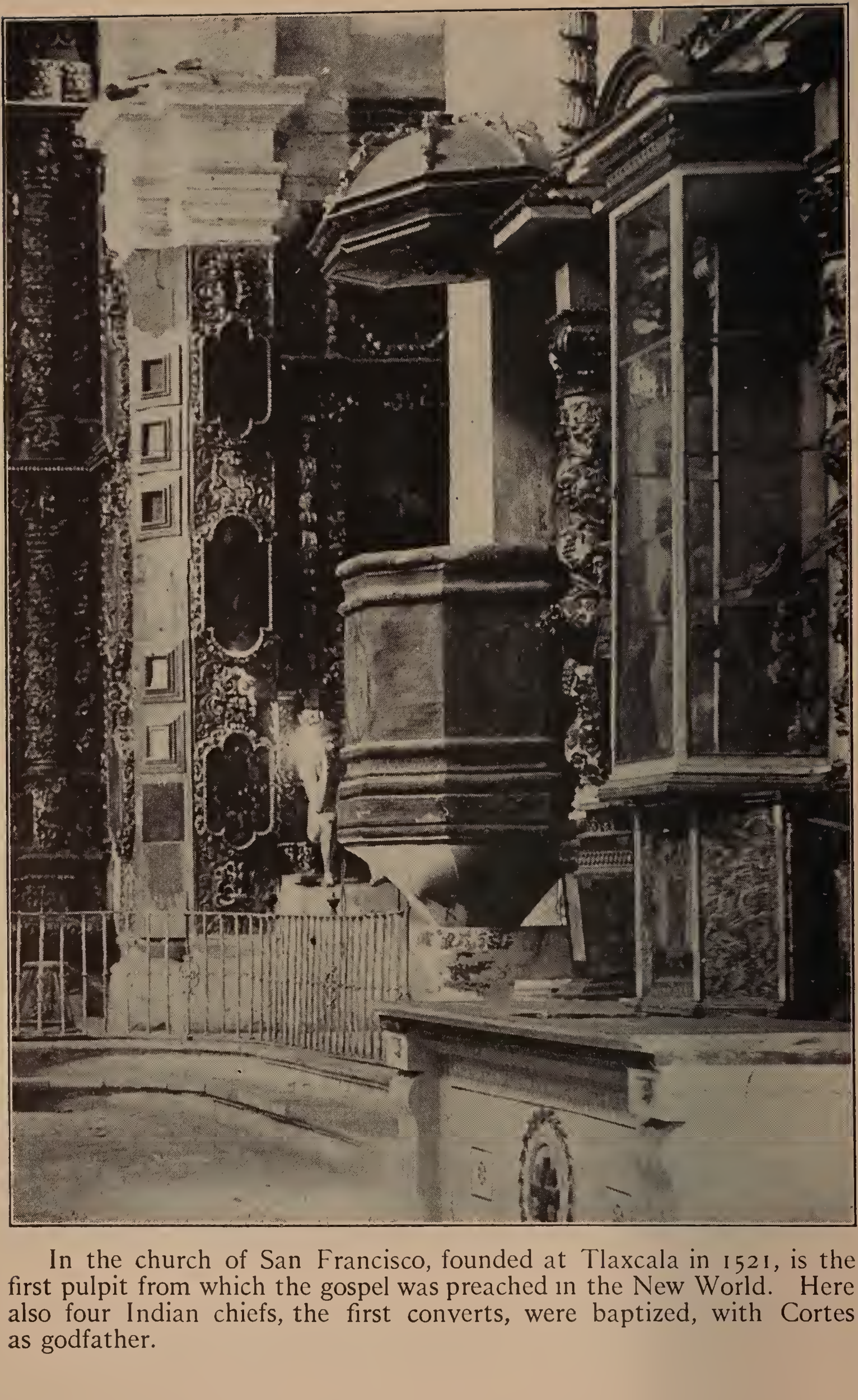
The Mexican people are really Catholics, and the great majority of them believe in their religion. I am told that there are eleven thousand churches and chapels in the Republic, and I find a cathedral in nearly every city I visit.

The Church is supposed to be enormously wealthy. At the time of the Juarez confiscations it had property amounting to three hundred million dollars and owned almost nine thousand estates. It had more than twenty-two thousand lots in Mexico City which alone were worth more than one hundred million dollars, and it had property scattered here and there throughout the land. When Juarez made the law of confiscation effective, a great part of this property was sold at auction to the highest bidders. It is said that those who bought risked the disfavour of the Church, and that many took over the properties and held them in trust so that it got them back. Others turned over to it the difference between the auction price and what the property would have brought under other conditions, and in this way the Church regained many of its millions. By the new law marriage was valid only through a civil contract, but no well-to-do woman in Mexico thinks of herself as really married unless she has the sanction of the Church for her wedding, and no priest would perform the ceremony for a family who had acquired church property unless some restitution was made.

I do not know how much has been spent on church buildings in Mexico but the sum must run high into the hundreds of millions. The Christian religion was brought here just twenty-five years after Columbus discovered the New World, and the early Spaniards prided themselves on their support of the Church. A goodly share of all the gold and silver taken out of the mines was donated to the cause of religion, and every cathedral was a treasure vault filled with ornaments of silver and gold. There is a church at Chihuahua which cost six hundred thousand dollars and was built through a tax of twenty-five cents on every pound of silver produced in that neighbourhood. The cathedral in Zacatecas was erected out of a tax levied on the silver mines under the city; and its income was so great that Europe was ransacked for pictures and ornaments to decorate it; for it could afford the best. It has a font of solid silver which cost more than fifty thousand dollars and in Spanish times it was ablaze with gold and silver candelabra and with cloths of woven gold. Another church in Zacatecas had an altar of gold, and one at Querétaro had a gold altar which was destroyed by the French.

The Catholic priests have done much for Mexico. In the Spanish Conquest the sword went along with the cross. Priests came with Cortes, and the friars and Jesuits sailed in the first ships that followed him. All through the interior of the country and even into the far southwest of what is now the United States, the devout friars, with a soldier or two for guards and messengers, gathered the Indians into their missions and taught them the principles of the Christian religion. Until the time of the Mexican independence, all education was in the hands of the priests, and in the early days of the Republic the schools were continued by them. But the Reform laws of Juarez made education a state matter, and even compulsory attendance laws were passed, although for lack of teachers and facilities they could not be carried out. In the recent decade of revolution the Protestant missionary schools as well as the Catholic schools were closed, and now there is

One reason that Mexico is a land of churches is the fact that in the old days men, made suddenly rich by mines, erected churches as thank offerings. Hundreds of peons worked without wages to build them.



In the church of San Francisco, founded at Tlaxcala in 1521, is the first pulpit from which the gospel was preached in the New World. Here also four Indian chiefs, the first converts, were baptized, with Cortes as godfather.

a great opposition to education under religious control of any sort. To-day less than a tenth of the people have a common school education and eighty per cent. cannot read a street sign or write their own names.

Under the Constitution of 1917, "No religious corporation or minister of any religious creed" is permitted to establish or direct primary schools. Churches may not acquire, hold, or administer real property. Places of public worship are declared to be the property of the federal government, which determines which of them may continue to be devoted to their present purpose. The Mexican government has asserted its rights by turning church buildings of all sorts into barracks for soldiers, offices, and even residences for its officials.

The Catholic Church still has a great hold upon the people. Ninety-five per cent. of the grown-up men and women of Mexico belong to it and it is the universal faith of the Indians. The ceremonies and the ritual of Catholicism appeal to the natives more than the simpler forms of Protestantism, and in Mexico the field of missionary work can be better cultivated by the Catholics than by the Protestants. The Catholics are gradually adopting the newer methods of that Church in other countries. The Knights of Columbus have organizations in many of the cities. They have evening classes for industrial and business courses and are opening employment bureaus. Some of the churches are establishing Sunday-schools and some of the church schools are adding playgrounds to their equipment.

Though the Protestant missionaries have worked long and earnestly here, Protestantism has never gained much headway in Mexico. Besides, the field is large and these churches have only one missionary to every twenty thousand of the population. This compares with one Catholic priest for every three thousand Mexicans. In the United States there is one priest or clergyman to every one hundred and fifty-three church members. The Baptists are represented in Mexico by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and by the foreign missionary board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Presbyterians have many church buildings, boarding and day schools, and a number of missions. The Methodist Episcopal Church has a number of native teachers and preachers and reports twelve thousand adherents. The last census showed that of the religious population only some seventy thousand are Protestants.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BULL-FIGHT

THIS afternoon I saw six magnificent bulls and twelve old horses tortured to death amid the clapping and shouting of twenty thousand Mexican spectators. The bull-fight was held in the Plaza de Toros, within a rifle shot of Chapultepec, and an equal distance of the mighty Cathedral. This bull-ring, it is claimed, is the biggest in the world, and with its seats rising in concentric circles from the arena in which the fighting goes on it reminds one of the amphitheatres of old Rome. Altogether it covers acres, and its seating capacity is just about one fourth that of the Colosseum. It will hold seven thousand more than the largest bull-ring in Madrid. The ring is built of American steel and cost seven hundred thousand dollars. It is the best patronized of all the places of amusement in the Mexican capital, and the box receipts of to-day must have been at least twenty-five thousand dollars. The holiday fights often net thirty thousand.

At the fight this afternoon there were at least twenty thousand spectators. The amphitheatre was filled from ring to roof with a more enthusiastic throng than you will find at a championship American baseball game.

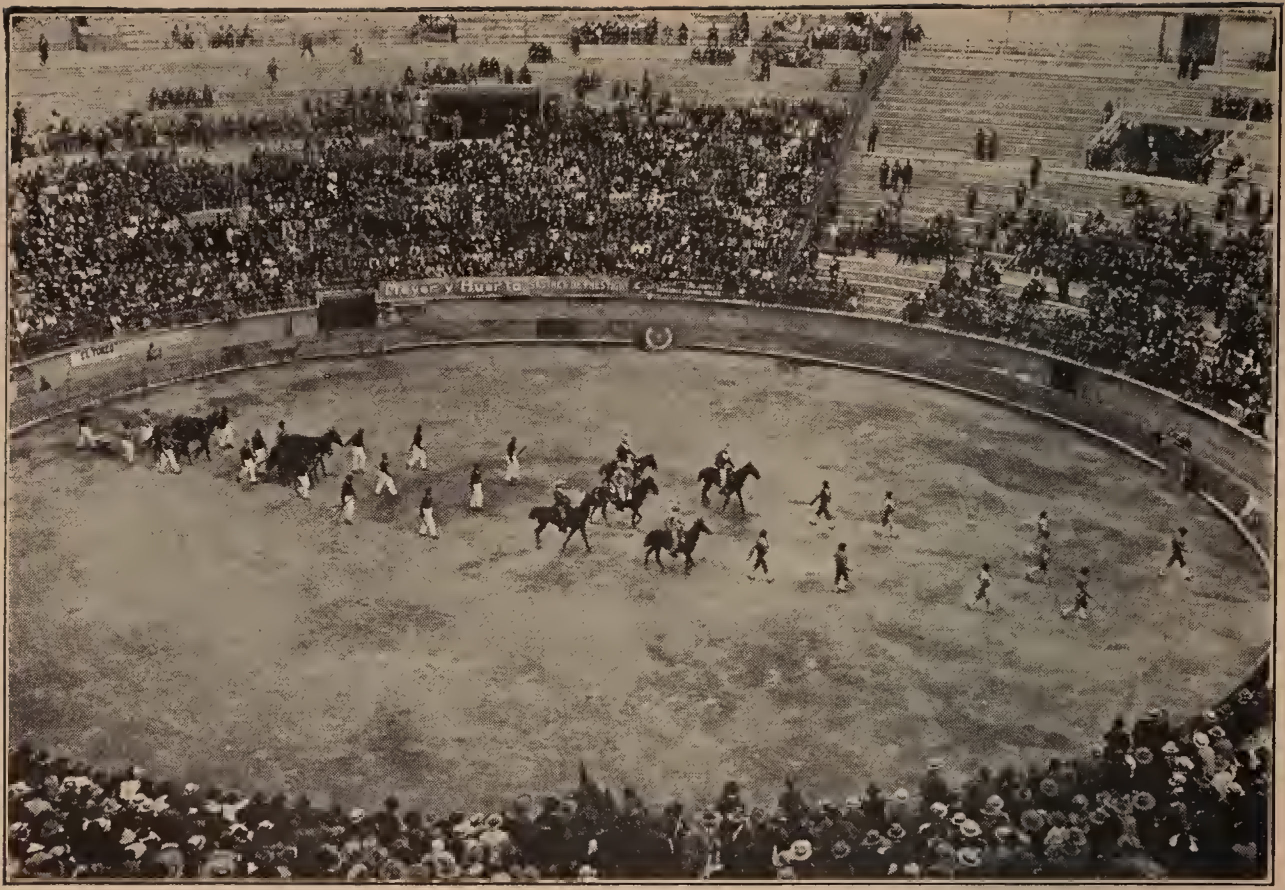
The crowd consisted of all ages and conditions of men. I saw well-dressed boys and girls of six and ten who shrieked their applause as the horns of the bulls gored deep into the horses. I saw delicate young ladies in new gowns from Paris, who split their white kid gloves in their clapping, and gaily dressed dudes who fairly burst their spat-covered patent leather shoes as they stamped in applause of the death stroke of the matador. There were also thousands of the common people, ranging from the Indian in his sandals and blanket to the country member of the Chamber of Deputies, from wrinkled old women in black shawls to young maids in mantillas, all forming, as it were, a great human flower garden rising from the arena to the top seats near the skies.

In addition to the spectators were the officials, on hand to direct the fighting and give the signals to start. There was a brass band which burst forth with triumphal marches from time to time as the fighting went on, and a company of soldiers with rifles and bayonets ready to shoot at a signal if any sign of disorder broke out.

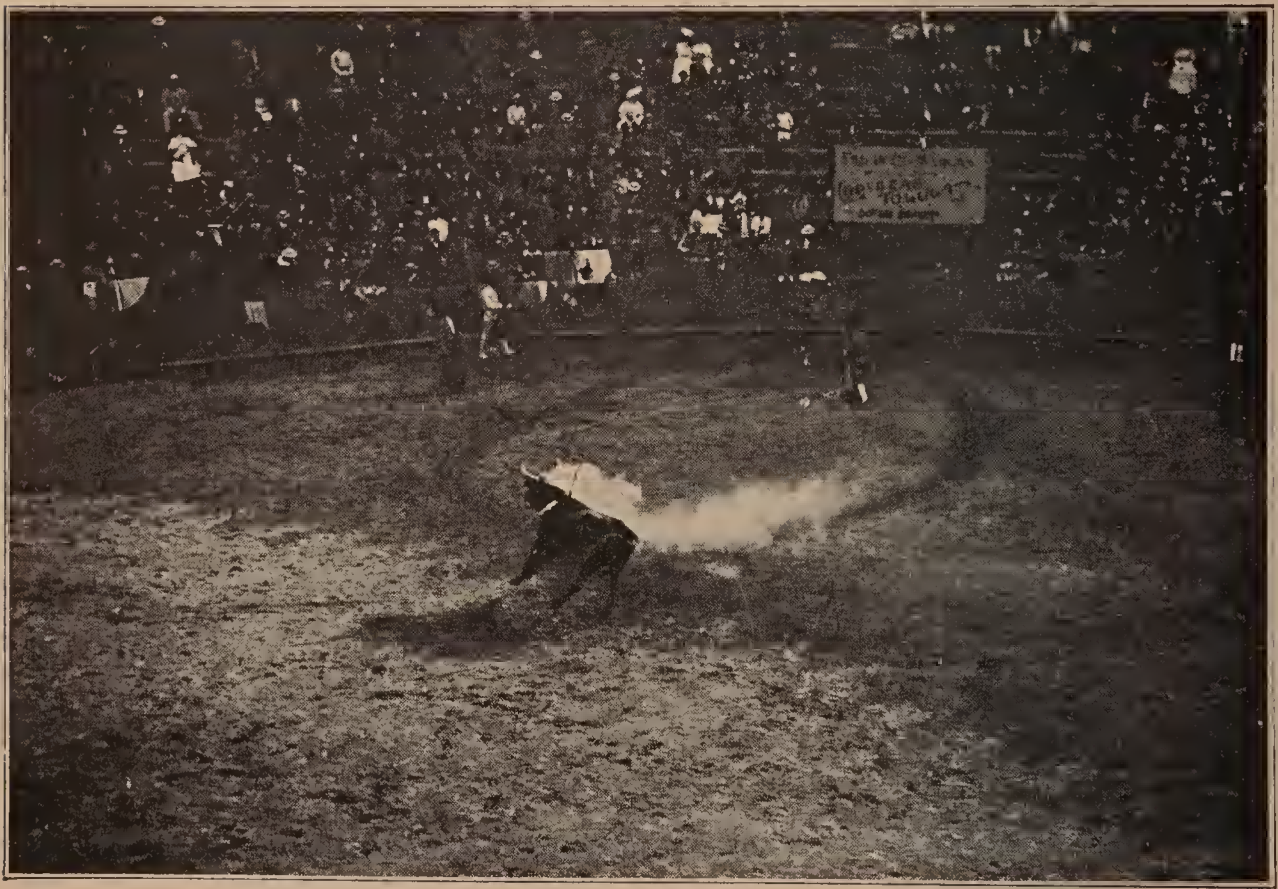
I sat in the shade and my place on the steps cost me four dollars. The fights always take place in the afternoon when the sun is declining, so that one half of the seats are in the shade and the others in the full glare. The shady seats are reserved and the sunny ones correspond to the bleachers of our baseball stands. Some of the box seats cost as much as those for a grand opera.

Further on I give some notes as I whispered them into the ear of my stenographer as the bull-fighting went on in the arena below me. The scene was a horrible one, as disgusting, I should think, as any of the gladiatorial shows on the banks of the Tiber during the days of Caligula and Nero. Nevertheless, even women waved their handkerchiefs and applauded as the blood flowed from the animals, reminding me of the Roman matrons who

Shaded roads lead through the forest reserve in which is the old monastery of El Desierto. The monks who built it chose the best of land for its site, and according to at least one seventeenth-century author, they lived anything but self-denying lives in their retreat.



Mexico City has the world's largest bull-ring, where fights are opened with an elaborate ceremonial that includes a parade of the performers, from the stars of the day to the attendants told off to drag out the dead animals.



Sometimes the barbs hurled into the bull's neck are equipped with tiny bombs which explode in his flesh, so that to the delight of the crowd he attacks his tormentors more fiercely than ever.

turned down their thumbs and condemned men to be devoured by the lions.

The worst feature was the torture of the horses, which the bulls were tormented into killing. The picadors, gaily dressed men upon horseback, rode in with great lances which they thrust at the bull and now and then drove into his shoulders. Maddened by their spears, a bull would dash at them and their mounts, and actually rip to shreds with his horns the scrawny, worn-out steeds. At times a single thrust would wound a horse almost to death. Gored again and again, he would be spurred and whipped to his feet and made to continue until finally killed. Each horse was blindfolded in one eye with a band of red flannel and the other eye was kept turned away from the bull so that the horse could not see the enraged beast rushing down upon him with its terrible horns.

Now suppose yourself sitting beside me in the Plaza de Toros looking at this amusement which is the favourite of all the Mexican people. We are close to the officials, between the ranks of the armed soldiers, about half-a-dozen rows above the arena. The band is over there at the right. The bull-fighters are coming. Some are on foot and some are on horseback. The police officers of the ring are mounted on capering stallions. The plumes of their hats wave as they ride around the arena, keeping time to the music of the band. Their horses are different from the ones the picadors will ride during the fighting. Behind come the matadors, the real bull-fighters, three walking abreast. They are gorgeous in gold lace, gold braid, pink knee-breeches, and beaded slippers. They have cloaks over their shoulders, reminding one of the feudal knights of the stage. They are the stars of the show and the spectators clap their hands as they strut through the ring.

Then come the banderilleros, with their barbed arrows, and finally the picadors in broad-brimmed hats, short velvet jackets, and breeches of light yellow leather. The picadors have gay scarfs about their waists, frilled shirt fronts, and gold waistcoats.

The procession is ended by the ring servants, sometimes called "the wise monkeys," who attend to the horses and clean up the ring after the fight, followed by the mule teams, gaily caparisoned, which, three abreast, drag the dead bulls and dead horses away at the end of each act.

The cavalcade goes round while the band plays, and as the music stops the bull-fighters and torturers take their places. Then the drum beats and a trumpet sounds. We follow the eyes of the audience. They are turned toward that door in the walls of the ring. See, it has opened and the bull rushes through! As it does so a man leans over and drives into its shoulder, up to the hilt, a dagger from which flutter bright-coloured ribbons.

The bull snorts with rage. It paws the sand of the arena, and then, seeing the matador waving a red blanket, goes on the rush, with head down, to wipe him from the face of the earth. The matador leaps off to one side, and the head of the bull is lost in the blanket. The beast now catches sight of another man with a purple shawl and rushes for him. It runs this way and that, its tormentors leaping out of the way, or, if crowded too closely, jumping over the walls into the space between the ring and the seats. Now the bull stops a moment and one of the picadors rides gaily toward it pointing his lance. The bull rushes at the horse and drives its horns into its belly. The horse falls; its bowels gush out, and the picador narrowly escapes by crawling over the fence. The throng is delighted at the sight of first blood.

Now the bull sees a second horse on the opposite side of the ring and rushes that way. It carries the animal to the ground and then makes for the picador. See, the great black beast is goring him! It has torn a piece from his thigh and the man escapes only because the matador has thrown his blanket over the eyes of the bull while some of the other fighters drag the wounded man to the wall.

The band breaks out once more. There is a blast at every new rush of the bull, and the music keeps time to the fight. After a while the bull tires. It is desperate at its failures to kill its tormentors. It is now further enraged by the banderilleros, of whom there are three. Each is armed with two sticks of ash about a yard long tipped at the end with steel barbs. These barbs are like harpoons or fish-hooks, each being attached to a long shaft decorated with bright-coloured paper.

The banderilleros stand in front of the bull and taunt it with the harpoons. As it rushes at them they jump this way and that, and, watching their chance, thrust the barbs deep into its shoulders. Only the shafts stick out, bobbing this way and that, as the animal runs. The blood flows from its shoulders to its feet in great red splotches.

Each man does his work, and at the end there are six of these terrible shafts torturing the bull at every motion it makes. Sometimes, to make it more angry and increase the pain, firecrackers or other explosives are fastened to the barbs, so that they burst and burn inside the flesh and a mist of smoke and blood rises. The panic-stricken bull leaps into the air. The crowd laughs and shouts over its antics.

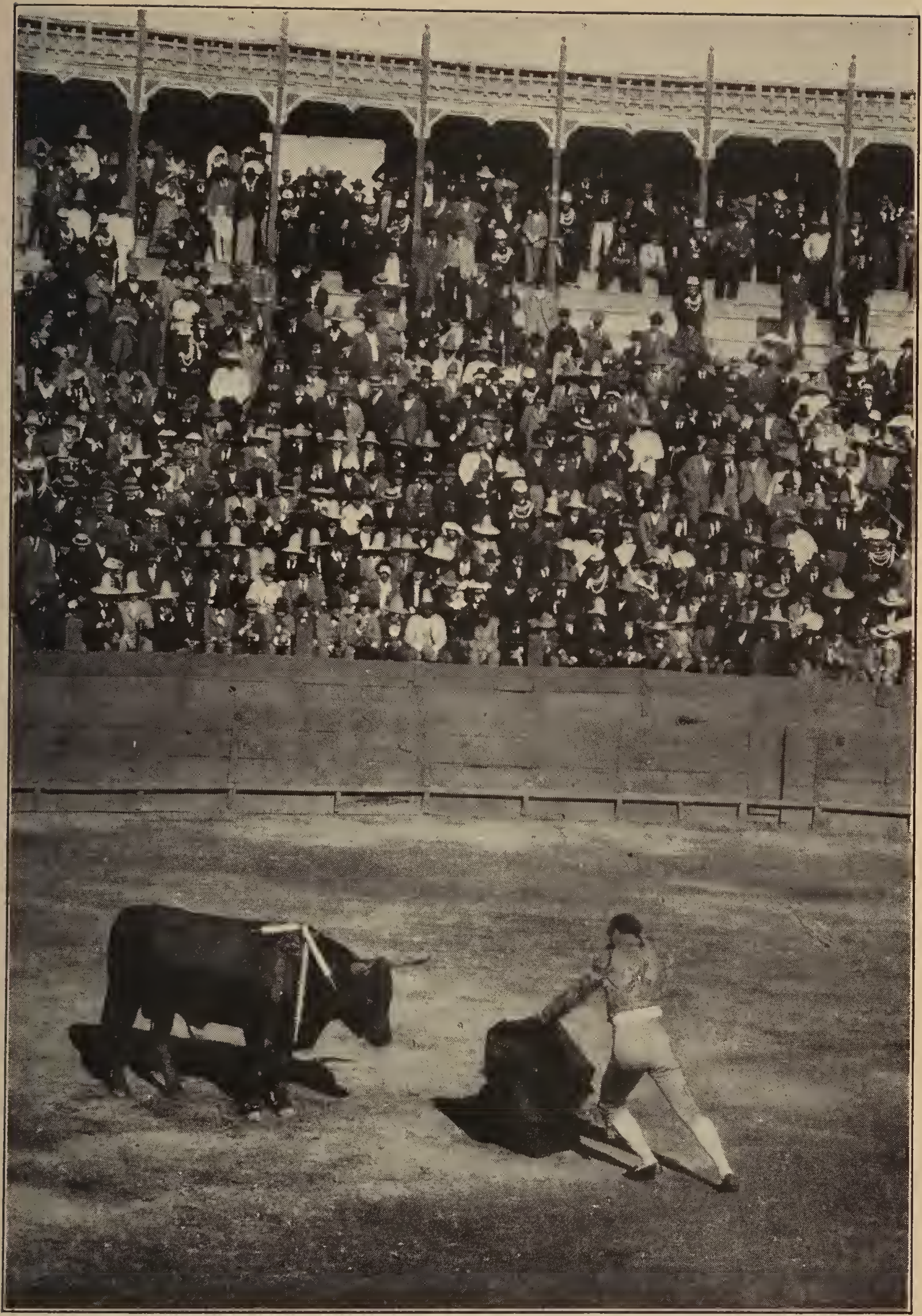
Now take a look at the crowd. The walls of humanity that surround the arena are alive with enthusiasm and shouting. Thousands of handkerchiefs are waving, and the clapping and the stamping and the cheering go on. The band continues to play, and as the enraged and tortured animal again rushes after its prey, the uproar increases. This continues for ten minutes, and then the bull seems to tire.

It is now time for the final act, and the throng howls for the matador who is to drive his sword into the bull and give the death blow. This is the critical time of the fight and the people almost pant with excitement. The matador teases the bull and tries to get it in just the position where he can drive his sword between the shoulders, right to the heart. He plays with the bull, making it rush this way and that, and finally points the sword at the level of its shoulder and, running his eye along the blade, aims at the point he wishes to strike. He tries again and again to give just the right thrust, and as he fails the crowd jeers.

He takes a new sword and this time succeeds in driving it in up to the hilt. Nevertheless, the bull charges again. It has a yard of steel through its body, but it makes one final effort to annihilate its tormentors, only to stagger and fall. As it does so the band strikes up once more and the blood-maddened spectators cheer.

In comes a team of three white mules in gay trappings. They are harnessed to the horns of the dead bull and drag it out on the run to the sound of the music and the shouts of the multitude.

This, in brief, is the sport which I saw repeated again



The matador is poised for the death thrust. He must plunge his sword to the hilt into the bull's body at just the right spot, and in the same instant escape the animal's lunge forward.

The Mexicans of all classes enjoy a picnic day in the country. Music is a feature of these occasions, which usually end in singing and dancing to their somewhat melancholy harmonies.

The peon loves a cockfight and will watch with delight two half-plucked roosters in a ring, picking at each other and stabbing with knife-edged steel spurs until one of them falls dead.

and again in six acts this afternoon. Each act resulted in the killing after prolonged torture of a splendid bull and two horses. Nevertheless, the butchers were heroes in the eyes of the crowd, and the more brutal their actions the greater the cheering. The most talked-of man in Mexico City is always the chief matador, and his pictures sell at the rate of one hundred to one in comparison with those of any other celebrity.

Bull-fighting is the favourite sport of the Spaniards and the Latin-Americans. You will find bull-rings in nearly all of the Mexican cities. There are big ones at Lima, Peru, and other South American capitals. The bull-ring at Madrid will seat thirteen thousand, that of Valencia seats more than sixteen thousand, while the one at Murcia accommodates seventeen thousand five hundred.

In Mexican towns the bull-ring is generally municipal property and it may be rented for such entertainments. In some cases, the amphitheatre belongs to the local hospital, bringing in a considerable revenue. Here in Mexico City the management pays the government fifteen per cent. of its total receipts in return for the exclusive privilege of putting on bull-fights in the Federal District. The enclosure contains a small hospital for treating the wounded fighters, as well as a chapel where they receive the Sacrament and the last offices of the Church in case they are mortally hurt. Formerly those killed in the arena were not accorded certain burial rights because they had died without confession.

The bull-fight came from Spain, where it has been common for more than eight hundred years, having been brought there by the Moors. The first bull-fighters were aristocrats, and it is recorded that ten knights lost their lives at a bull-fight festival just about twenty years after Columbus came to this part of the world. As time went on the sport increased in popularity, and that notwithstanding the fact that Pope Pius V threatened to excommunicate all princes who permitted matadors within their dominions.

As time went on bull-fighting passed from the hands of the aristocrats into those of professionals and the sport is now on a purely commercial basis. The best fighters still come from Spain, and the city of Seville has bred the most noted. According to a statement before me ninety per cent. of all the Spanish matadors come from there. Pedro Romero, the greatest of all, was in the ring for more than thirty years, and died at the age of eighty-five, having slain more than five thousand bulls. I am told that the average yearly kill of a crack matador exceeds one hundred bulls and that a star fighter sometimes gets from three to five thousand dollars for an afternoon's entertainment. From this he must pay the three banderilleros and the three picadors who make up his company.

The best of the fighting bulls are bred as carefully as our pedigreed horses and cattle and certain breeds command the highest prices. The best come from Spain, a good one bringing five hundred dollars. In addition to this is the cost of transportation, so that a Spanish bull costs six hundred dollars or more by the time it reaches Mexico City. It has to be rested for several months before it can be brought into the ring, and at the same time every effort is made to keep it vicious and easily angered. As to the Mexican-bred bulls, there are certain haciendas which make a specialty of them, but the Spanish-bred are the fiercest and draw the best crowds.

Many of the upper class in Mexico now frown on bull-fighting and do not appear at the ring. President Diaz was opposed to the sport, but the people were so much attached to it that even at the height of his power he dared not abolish it. More than once bull-fights have been forbidden within the Federal District, but the people have insisted on having them back. There is an organized movement for the abolition of the sport, and as the sentiment against it is growing, it is likely ultimately to disappear. Bull-fights are forbidden in several of the towns of Mexico.

Another favourite amusement of the Mexicans is cock-fighting. This is the commonest diversion on feast days and saints' days, and where special holy festivals are held cocks are shipped in by the thousands. The best breeds of these birds are well known, and a cock with a record will easily bring twenty-five dollars. Some of the best come from crosses of the American game cock with Japanese hens.

These cocks are cared for like racehorses. They are exercised and trained for the fray. They are kept clean and are given special kinds of food which are supposed to increase their fighting spirit.

Before they enter the pit the chickens are stripped for the encounter. Each has had the feathers plucked from its back, neck, and legs, so that it looks pitiably cold. The neck and head are bare and the red ears glow out of the baldness. The feathers are picked out one by one and from time to time, so as not to injure the cock, and its flesh is then toughened by massaging and squeezing until it is all muscle and gristle. Removal of the feathers is necessary, because otherwise the cocks catch hold of each other's feathers with their bills and hold on until they can get in a deadly blow with the spur.

The birds are equipped with gaffs or spurs made of steel. The gaffs are knife blades three or four inches long, strapped to the ankle with a piece of soft leather; they are as sharp as razors, and a single thrust may cause death. Before the fight begins, the backers fill their mouths with brandy and blow it out in a spray over the heads, wings, and tails of the fowls. The cocks are then made to peck at each other, and when they are sufficiently angry they are set down and go at it. The cocks fence for positions like prizefighters, sparring and parrying. After a time they begin to jump at each other, each endeavouring to stab his enemy with his steel spurs. They are urged on and kept fighting, round after round, until one or the other drops dead.

CHAPTER XXII

FOOD AND DRINK BELOW THE RIO GRANDE

I WISH I could show you a Mexican kitchen. We have nothing like it at home. It is a little room with a floor of red bricks. The range is a number of oven-like holes in a ledge of brick and clay, extending two or three feet from the wall with its top about four feet from the floor. Each of the holes is one cooking place. It is filled with charcoal and the draft comes in from an opening underneath. The Mexican cook wants no other stove.

One American here recently sent for a cooking range from the States. He had to tear a hole through the rear wall to make room for the chimney. After setting it up in his daughter's house, he gave instructions that it be used. Later his daughter reported that although the servants had struggled for hours they could not make the new stove burn. When he went to investigate he found they had built the fire in the oven.

Home baking is almost unknown in Mexico, but many of the Indian villages have great ovens which are used in common. The family desiring to bake brings its own fuel, or sometimes several join together in a baking day.

The cooking pots, which are sometimes copper but more often red clay, are set on the live coals, and water is boiled, soups are made, meats are fried, and, in short, first-class meals are prepared in this way. The fuel is comparatively cheap, so that a workingman's family can do its cooking on about two cents' worth a day. Much of the food is boiled or fried, and the good cooks make tasty soups and stews highly flavoured with pepper. Almost everything is hot with condiments of one kind or other. The cooking is a kind of a mixture of the culinary arts of both Spaniards and Indians.

The Aztecs surprised their white invaders with their table. They had thirty different ways of dressing meats, and it is said that at one meal served for Montezuma there were three hundred different dishes and that the servants who prepared them and waited upon the table numbered more than one thousand. The Aztecs had chickens, turkeys, pheasants, tame and wild geese, and a half-dozen different kinds of game. They had fish from the lakes as well as some from the ocean.

At the better-class houses of to-day the Mexicans have elaborate luncheons and dinners, and not a few serve their meals in European style. The average family, however, lives *à la* Mexico, and the meals are much the same throughout the Republic. This means a rather heavy diet of beans, corn bread, and fats. The Mexicans eat comparatively few vegetables. Rice often takes the place held by potatoes with us, and squash is commonly eaten. Few Mexicans care for salads, even the alligator pear being used rather as a sort of butter than as a salad.

The typical dishes are *tortillas*, *tamales*, *enchiladas*, and *frijoles*. There are also stews of meat with peppers, commonly called *chile con carne*, and some other dishes the names of which I cannot give. The *tortillas* are a kind of mashed hominy pounded and kneaded into a tough dough. They are made of Indian corn soaked for twelve hours in lye water, after which the swollen grains are mashed by rubbing them between stones. The mush, or dough, thus made is kneaded into thin cakes about the size of a saucer. These are baked but not browned over the coals and they are eaten without salt or any other seasoning. *Tortillas* are always sold about the markets where one can get them hot from the fire at a few cents a dozen. Even in the menus of the well-to-do wheat bread seldom appears except with the chocolate or coffee of the first breakfast.

Tamales are made of corn treated in the same way as for *tortillas* and wrapped around ground pork, highly seasoned, and enclosed in corn husks. They are boiled in lard for a quarter of an hour and then served steaming hot. They are also made with raisins or soft sweetmeats in the middle. *Tamales* are eaten cold by ranch-hands and miners. They are sold at railway stations and are also served at picnics or afternoon tea-parties. A *tamalada*, or party for eating *tamales*, is a festal occasion, like a watermelon feast with us.

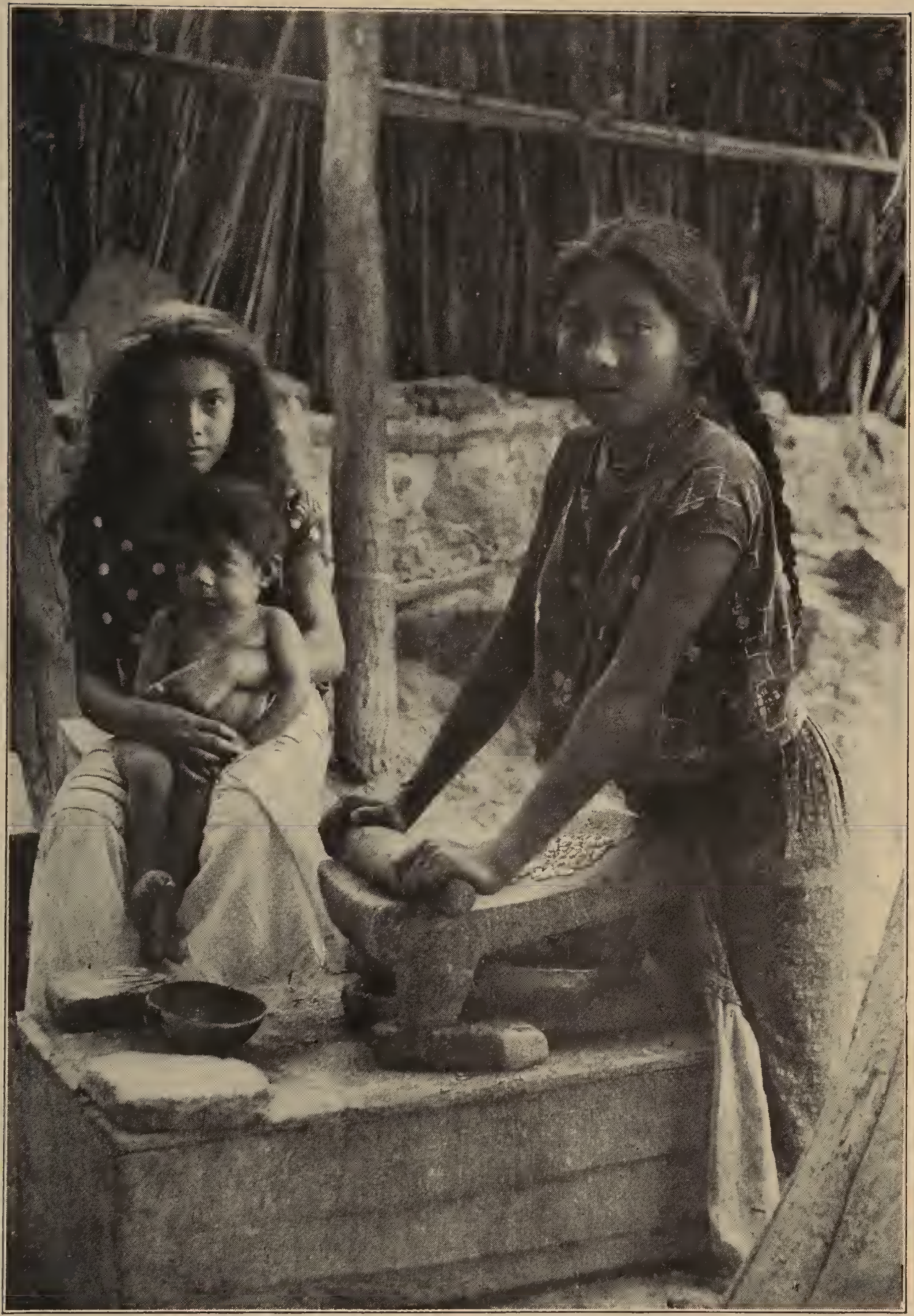
In making the cakes called *enchiladas*, *tortillas* are used as a base, but the cakes are filled with a kind of hash of onions, peppers, and native cheese. A favourite dish is *barbacca*, a sort of barbecued mutton prepared in an oven made of a hole in the ground lined with cactus leaves and so covered that the meat cooks and steams all night.

Another dish made of mutton is *puchero*. This is a stew made by cooking the meat in a little water with carrots, parsnips, green corn, cabbage, and a half-dozen other vegetables, as well as onions, apples, and squashes. The stew is kept on the fire two hours or so without skimming. It is dressed without salt or other seasoning. The Mexican cuisine has eggs in a half-dozen different styles, chickens and turkeys, kids, and young pigs.

Frijoles, which are served at every meal except the first breakfast, are Mexican black or red beans equal to the best "Boston baked." Beans are used so much that the joking invitation of one Mexican to another is, "Come home to beans with me." Most Mexican cooking is made very hot with chiles and is usually somewhat greasy. The people seem to crave fats and the careful housekeeper has to watch her lard as the servants eat it just as it comes from the grocer.

Though Mexico is a stock-raising country, meat is so high that the poor man's house seldom has it. There are cook-shops about the markets where the shreds and cuttings and scraps are fried over charcoal and offered for sale. Here the Indian customers take up the greasy morsels in their fingers and consume them without knives, forks, or plates.

The ways of butchering and marketing are different from ours. Every part of the animal is eaten. When an American firm was in charge of the slaughter-house in Mexico City it found it was cheaper to send to the States for the skins to cover their sausages, as the entrails of the animals killed readily sold to the natives at good prices. A great deal of the beef is cut in long strings, and sold almost by the yard. Much of it is jerked, or dried, and is used for stews. In some of the interior cities the butcher's wagon is a mule with a framework bearing hooks set on the saddle. Halves and quarters of beef are hung on the hooks, and as the mule moves along the blood from the meat drips to the ground. If the mule is small, the meat almost touches the roadway and is peppered with the dust raised by the animal's feet. The peddlers will hack off a slice for you upon order. Sometimes the butcher's boy, on the



Corn, not wheat, is the staff of life in Mexico. The peon woman spends most of her days soaking the grains in lime water, kneading the softened mass on a stone, pounding it into a paste, and baking it into *tortillas*.

Pulque, the Mexican beer, is made from the sap of the maguey cactus gathered in pigskin sacks. The fermented liquor loses its flavour so quickly that it must be brought to town and sold the day it is made.

On the square holes of a brick or tile stove are cooked the beans, the *tamales*, and the chile-seasoned dishes for which the Mexican cuisine is noted. Oil and gas burners are sometimes found, but charcoal is the common fuel.

way to a customer, uses one of the meat strips in his basket to take a whack at a passing dog.

The meat of bulls killed in the bull-fights is not sold as it is considered poisoned by the "heated blood" due to the animal's rage at the time of his killing. It is either thrown away or else given to soldiers and prisoners.

So far, the Mexicans are not educated up to cold-storage beef. Some Americans started an up-to-date refrigerating plant in the cattle country at Uruapam, but the venture was unsuccessful. Canned foods from the States are extremely popular with the people who can afford them. Canned salmon is in general use and sardines are especially liked by the peons, who stow away enormous quantities of them on feast days and holidays when they are spending freely.

Here is how one eats around the clock at Mexico City. When he rises he has *desayuno*, or the first breakfast of which I have spoken. This is so light that it would hardly form a wedge to keep the stomach of an American from rubbing his backbone. It is merely a cup of coffee, or chocolate, and rolls. The coffee is usually an extract poured from a bottle into hot milk. Such breakfasts are served at all the hotels, and if you want meat or eggs you have to pay extra.

The next meal is *almuerzo*, or *comida*. *Almuerzo* consits of bread, generally *tortillas*, and meat and eggs, with coffee and chocolate; and the *comida*, served between eleven a.m. and one-thirty p.m., is made up of a soup, eggs, rice, fish, some kind of meat, with dessert and a small cup of coffee. Dinner, which comes between seven and eight o'clock, is much the same as the *comida*.

One can have the first breakfast in bed if he likes. The second breakfast is eaten in the dining room with all of the family at the table. After this breakfast comes the siesta, or rest, of two hours or more.

There are more than a hundred restaurants in Mexico City. Among the best known are Sylvain's and the Café Chapultepec, both of which have French cooks. Sanborn's, the famous American restaurant, is housed in the beautiful old Jockey Club building. This is known everywhere as the House of Tiles. It was built in the sixteenth century by one Don Rodrigo, the Count of the Valley of Orizaba. His son, Luis de Vivero, grew up into such an extravagant and idle young man that his father once said to him: "My son, you will never build a house of tiles," which was the same as telling him he would never set the world on fire. This remark so stung the young fellow's pride that he braced up, set to work, married well, and as soon as he became owner of the house, he covered it with tiles. On Sunday mornings after mass the patio of Sanborn's is thronged with the beautiful women and the wealth and fashion of the capital.

The cost of living is rising in Mexico, just as it has done all over the world. Some years ago one could live almost anywhere for from two to four dollars a day, but here at the capital a room alone now costs more than used to be required for a whole day's expenses.

Compared with what they used to be, rents in Mexico City are exceedingly high. Flats rent for from fifty to two hundred dollars a month, and good houses of from eight to twelve rooms bring from one thousand to three thousand dollars a year, while in the best residential sections they are even higher than that. On the other hand, there are families living in two rooms, for which they pay less than ten dollars a month, while the very poor are crowded into warrens where the rent is not half as much. In the latter case the rooms are often unlighted and without ventilation.

To keep house in Mexico City costs considerable money, for the domestic work is organized differently from the way it is with us, and one has to have three times as many servants to get the same results. The labour is divided, and one servant will never do the work of another. The cook will not make the bed nor will the chambermaid help in the kitchen, and she will often refuse to serve at the table. The cook would leave if asked to do the washing, and even the *mozo* has limited duties. As a result, the average well-to-do family has four or five servants, and there are big housekeeping leaks. The cook expects to feed her family from the kitchen and often runs a sort of boarding house for her relatives on the side.

The wages of domestics are higher in the capital than elsewhere in the Republic. Here the cooks get as much as household help in my own city, Washington. In the smaller towns cooks receive much less and work from dawn until after dark. If they understand how to use a stove and to do foreign cooking they get double wages, but this is from the foreigner who always pays through the nose.

Housemaids get about half as much as the cooks while chauffeurs rank as skilled labourers and their wages run high. There is usually a *mozo*, or manservant, who tends the door, carries the water, and does other odd jobs. Some of the wages include board, and others an allowance for food. The latter, however, is seldom more than twenty cents a day.

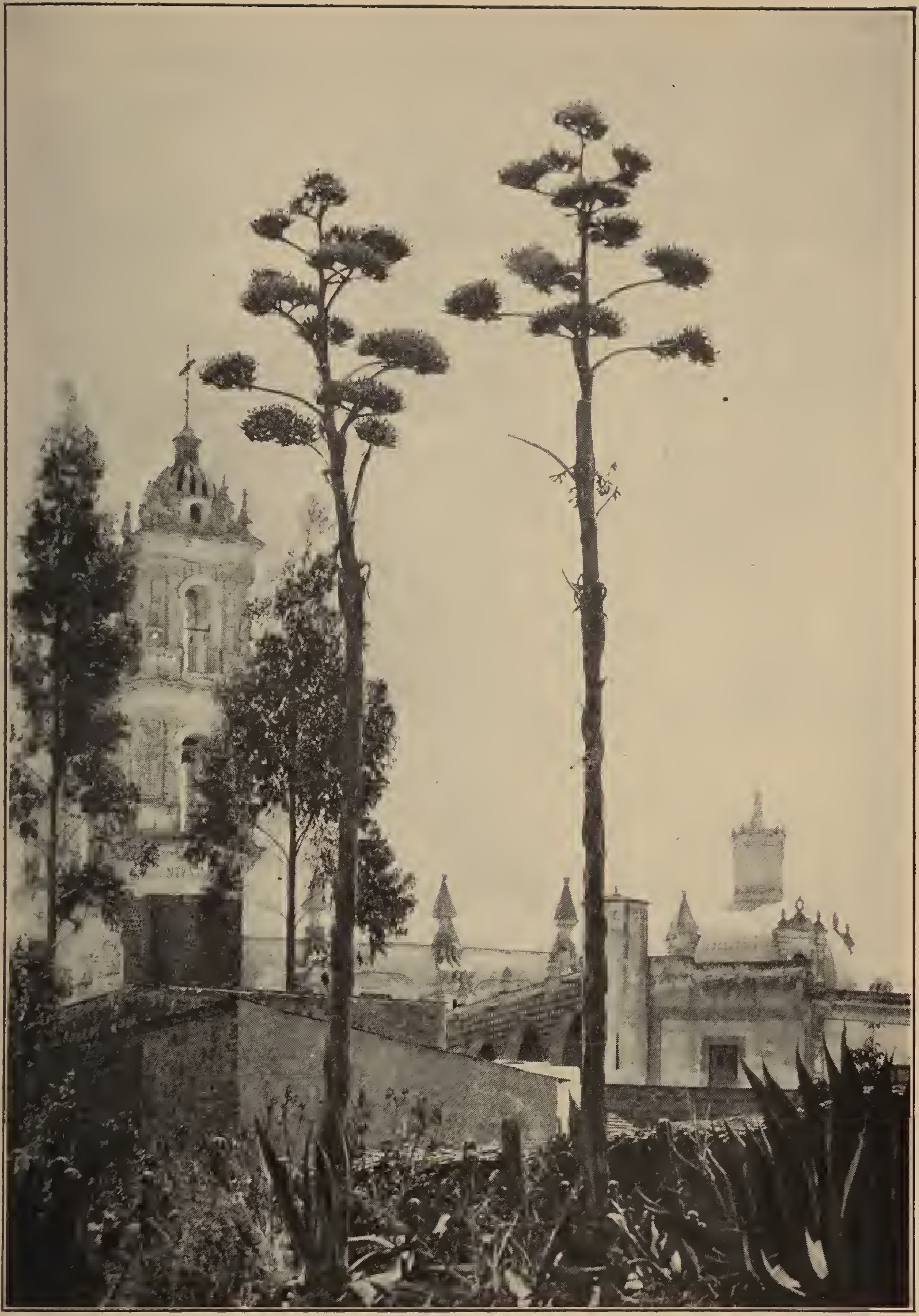
The Mexican lady scarcely ever goes to the markets herself; the cook or the *mozo* does the buying, squeezing a commission wherever it can be had. Only one day's supplies are bought at a time, even to the half-cent's worth of salt on top of the market basket. This is not only to save waste because of lack of refrigeration, but also because the servants like their daily outing and take pleasure in haggling with the market men and women.

In the homes of the wealthy there is usually a housekeeper who carries the keys and manages the servants. She buys the provisions and takes charge of the nurses and the children. In such houses there is also a doorkeeper at the front door day and night. He generally sleeps inside on the floor.

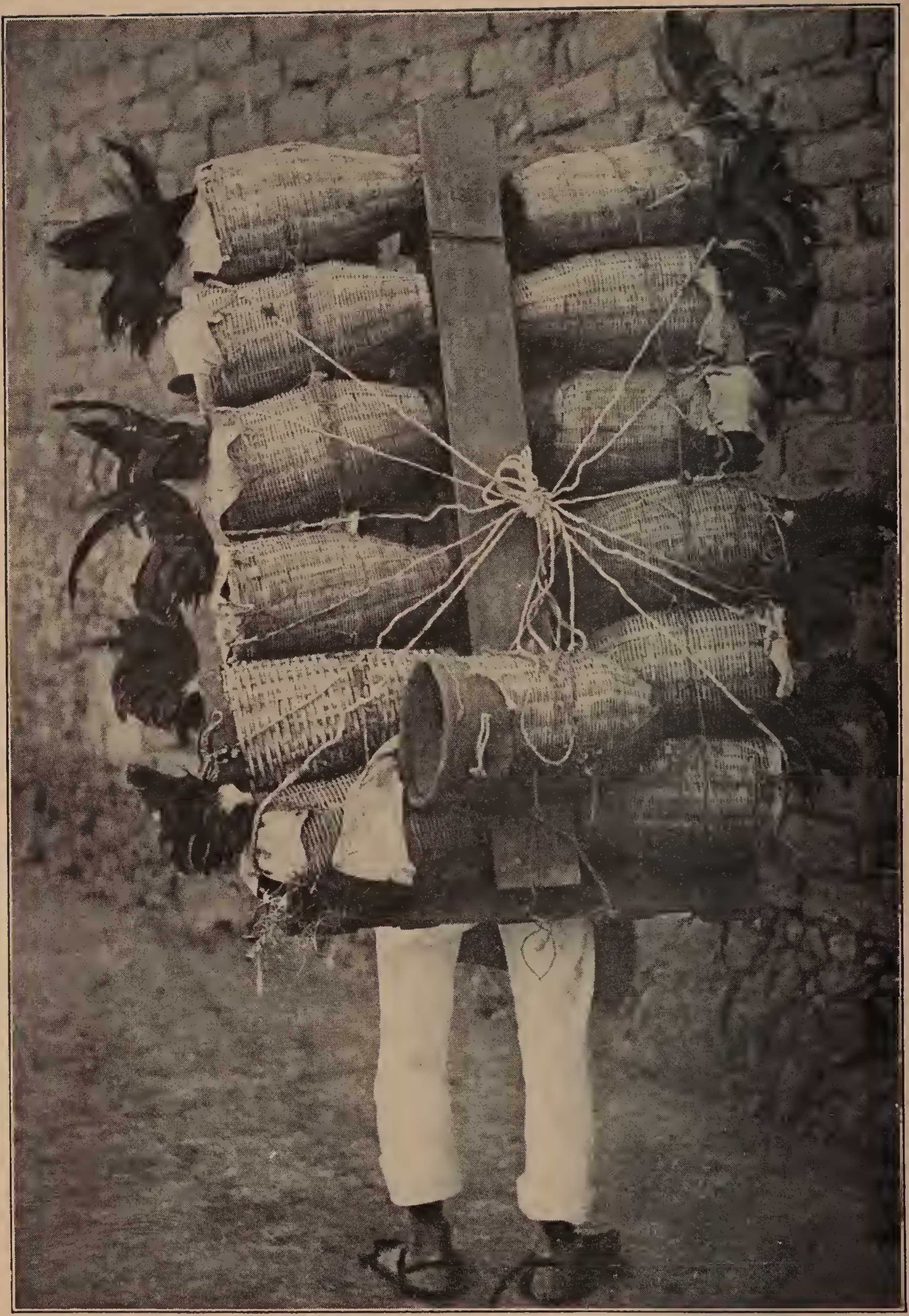
There is a growing class of country Mexicans, mostly half-breeds, who come to the cities as servants and save enough money to go back rich to their homes. The servant class is respected by the lower orders, and holds a real place in the Mexican household. The domestics are present at family weddings and christenings and are encouraged to confide their joys and woes to their mistresses.

As to what Mexico drinks, that would fill a chapter. The rich have all kinds of wine, and the poor have their *aguardiente*, or Mexican brandy, and *pulque*, the native beer made from the cactus. *Aguardiente* is distilled from the juice of the sugar cane. It is a brandy so hot that a rag wet with it and laid on the skin will soon raise a blister; I have been told it is good for sore throat. In Guatemala it is called "white eye," and a few glances from it will make the foreigner drunk.

Pulque is about the cheapest beer of the world. All over the Mexican plateau one can buy it for one cent a glass, and the wholesale price is about three cents a quart. It is said that more than two hundred thousand gallons are consumed daily in Mexico City. This makes about



When its flower-stalk is not cut off by the pulque gatherer, the maguey cactus sends up a stem twenty or thirty feet tall crowned with clusters of greenish-yellow blossoms. After this the plant dies.



These birds are too expensive to eat, for they will bring big prices as fighters. Game-cocks are carried with their heads hidden like this so that they may not peck at each other.

six tumblerfuls per day for every man, woman, and child in the capital, and the consumption is proportionately large in many other parts of the Republic. The beer is brought here by the trainload, and also on carts and in wagons. Each morning there come into the capital one hundred carloads of *pulque*, or many times the number of milk cars. The sales amount to thousands of dollars, and the tax upon it forms an important item in the public revenues. Even during the times of the Spaniards, the annual consumption in Mexico City was so large that the tax paid to the crown exceeded eight hundred thousand Mexican dollars. Of recent years the government has increased the tax, not only to gain more revenue but in the hope of decreasing the drinking.

Both the government and the people realize the evils of intoxicating liquors and the day may come when prohibition will cut as great a figure here as it does in the United States. Several of the provinces are already dry and there are anti-alcohol leagues in others. The movement is devoted to the prohibition of *pulque* rather than to that of the wines and beers drunk by the upper classes. The government of Carranza ordered that the *pulque* shops should be closed on Sundays but this law soon became a dead letter. The trades unions very generally advocate the suppression of drinking. There have been labour parades in the cities in favour of closing the saloons on Sundays, and in such parades one sees banners bearing the slogans "We Want Education, Not Drink"; "The Working Men Want Schools, Not Saloons."

The land barons are against these movements, preferring to keep the Indians in such a backward state as means low wages and easy exploitation.

Pulque is nature's own product. It comes from the sap of the maguey, a cactus of the same species as the century plant. It may be seen growing in endless rows on the plantations of the tablelands. The Plain of Apam, near Puebla, is entirely given up to the production of *pulque*. The plants there cover tens of thousands of acres, making veritable forests of cactus. The leaves sprout from the ground around a green cone, or stalk, which is a foot thick at the base and rises high above them and ends in a point like a needle. When this stalk is about seven years old it flowers out, and then the plant dies.

It is just before blossoming that the maguey is ready for *pulque*. The stalk is then cut out of the base of the plant, leaving a great bowl in which the sap gathers. The juice runs so fast that one plant will furnish ten or fifteen pints every day and it continues its flow for three or four months, yielding barrels and sometimes hogsheads of liquor.

As the sap flows into the bowl it is as sweet as sugar and as clear as pure alcohol. After twenty-four hours it looks like skim milk and tastes not unlike buttermilk. It then begins to give forth an odour, which grows stronger as the liquor grows older. Indeed, I believe that one could shut his eyes and find the *pulquería*, or saloon, by following his nose.

I have tried drinking *pulque*. It has about the same effect as strong German bock. It makes one feel comfortable, and if he takes a little too much it will go to his head. It acts upon the liver and the kidneys, and some claim it is an excellent tonic. If it is taken before retiring at night, one need have no fear of insomnia, and he sleeps free from dreams.

I have travelled for miles through these *pulque* plantations and watched the dirty Indian peons gathering the liquor. Each carries a long gourd and a sack of untanned pigskin. He first sucks the gourd full of sap and then empties it into the bag. When a bag is full it is emptied into a cask, where the liquor is allowed to ferment. Sometimes fermentation is hastened by throwing into the bag a little old *pulque* which has become rank and sour. It takes only twenty-four hours to turn the sap into beer, and it is marketed the day it is made. If it gets old it spoils and grows flat. For this reason it cannot be shipped off the plateau and so it is unknown in the lowlands. The *pulque* dealers are compelled by law to sell none more than twenty-four hours old.

There are about a thousand *pulque* saloons at the capital. One finds them on almost every block and knows them by the florid-faced Indians hanging around them. The walls of the *pulquerías*, facing the street, are usually decorated with fringes of gaudy paper and sometimes with crude paintings. The saloons have all sorts of queer names. I know of one called "The Sanctuary." In the Street of the Holy Ghost is another whose sign is "The Hang-out of John the Baptist."

When he can afford it, the peon tops off his drink of *pulque* with some *mescal*, a strong distilled liquor made from the aloe. Then, indeed, he feels like shouting the lines of a Spanish verse, which translated reads:

Know you not that *pulque*
  Is a liquor divine
And that angels in heaven
  Prefer it to wine?

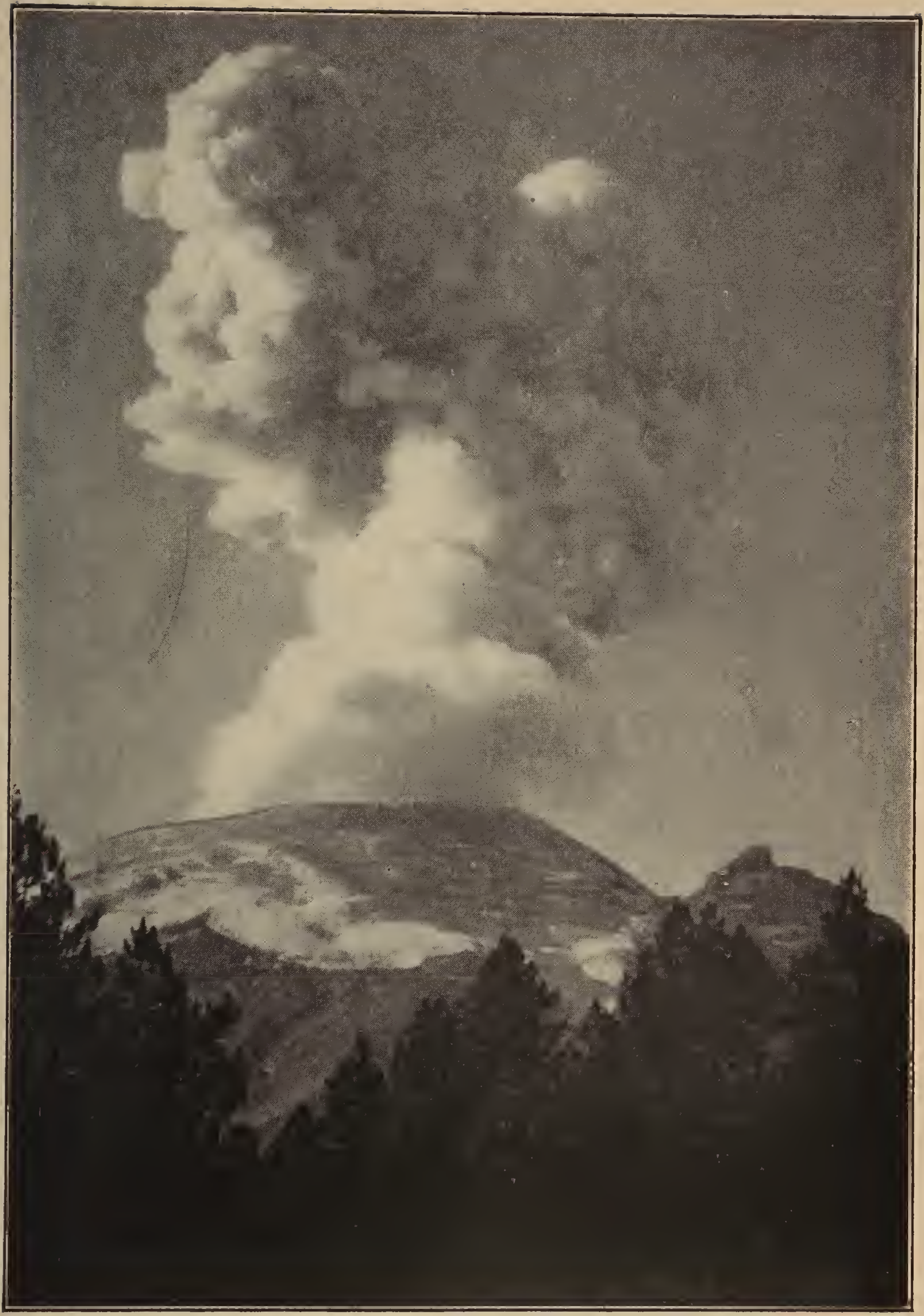
CHAPTER XXIII

"OLD POPO"

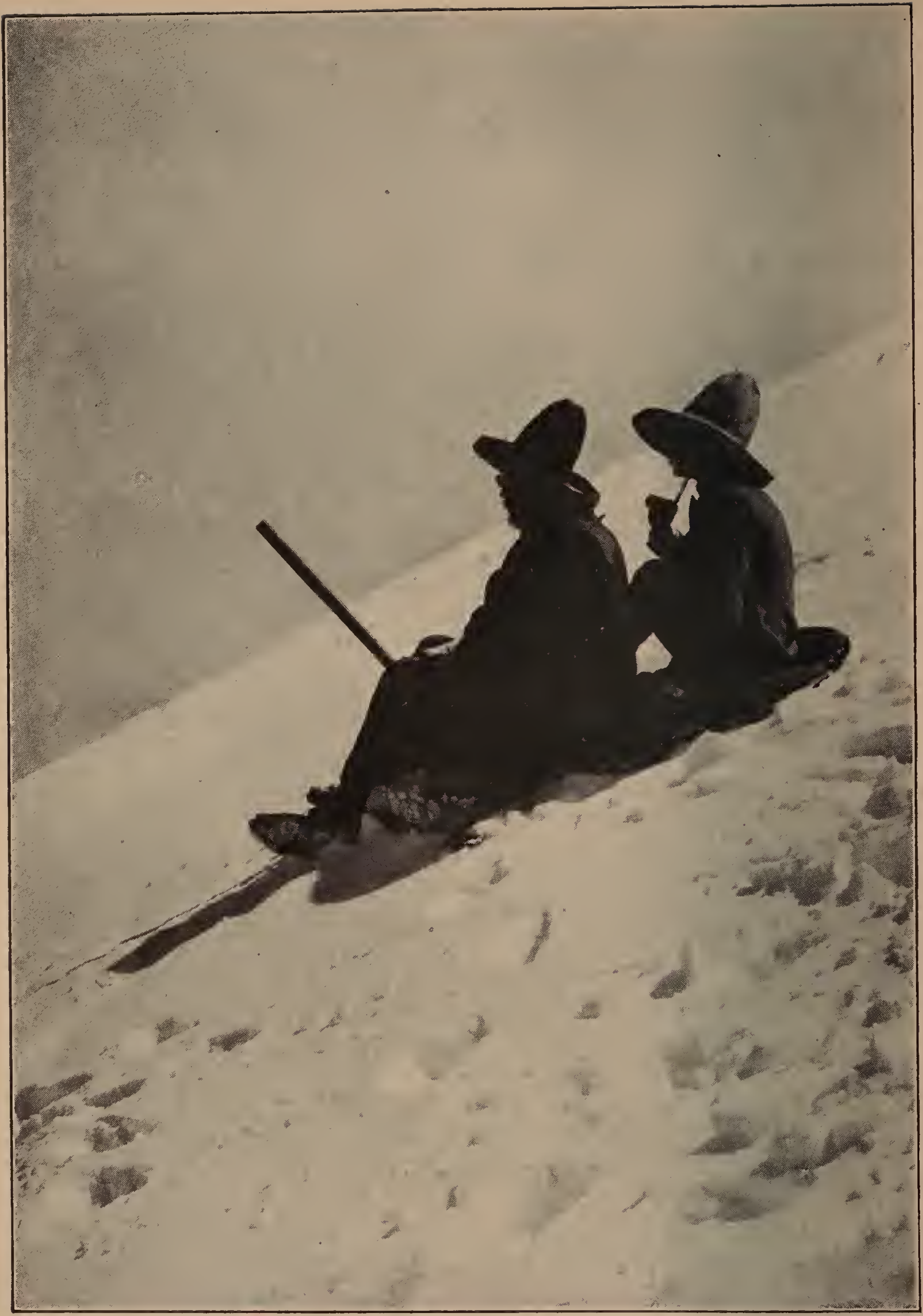
DO YOU want to buy a volcano?

If so, come to Mexico and size up Popocatapetl. It is the highest smoking volcano on the North American continent, and every now and then someone comes along who thinks it can be made to pay big dividends. The old mountain has been for sale, off and on, for the last thirty years or so. A deal was once made for its purchase by a syndicate of Americans. The consideration was to be ten million dollars in Mexican money, and the American company had an authorized capital of ten million dollars in gold. The plan was to work the enormous sulphur resources of the volcano and at the same time to supply ice to Mexico City from the ice fields that cover the peak. The principal forests about the base of the mountain were to be converted into a beautiful park and an inclined railway to the top was to attract tourists from all over the world.

The sale was only partially consummated. The title was disputed and after several years the project was abandoned. The mountain then came back to General Sanchez Ochoa, one of the great mining engineers of Mexico, who had owned it for many years. Other companies have since considered the purchase, and their plans include cogged railroads, not only to the top of old "Popo," but



For centuries Popocatepetl lived up to its Indian name, "smoke mountain," with frequent eruptions. Now, after one hundred years, it is belching again. It is North America's third highest peak.



The descent from "Popo" is easy for any one willing to imitate the Indians and slide down the snow-covered mountain on a mat, guided by a stick which also serves as a brake.

also to Ixtaccihuatl, that mighty extinct volcano towering into the clouds only a few miles away.

Popocatepetl itself is a live volcano, or, at best, it is only sleeping. Since the time of Cortes it has had ten great eruptions. It is the Vesuvius of America and is liable to break out at any time in another explosion of lava and fire. Its last eruption was in 1802, but just recently there was an outburst of gases and vapour, which are still breathing forth from the holes in its crater. These holes are from seven to twelve inches in diameter, and they ooze liquid sulphur, making the volcano a huge brimstone factory.

The crater of "Popo" is about a mile wide at the top and something like a thousand feet deep. It is shaped like a bell, or the crown of a Mexican sombrero. The diameter at the bottom is one fourth of a mile. The floor is of pure sulphur, which extends down in a mass for one thousand feet. The mountain is spitting forth sulphur at the rate of about a million tons per annum. Since the conquest of Mexico more than one hundred million tons have been taken out, and it is estimated that there is half as much more on the floor of the crater.

The supply is far beyond the demands of the world. Sulphur sells for about twenty dollars a long ton, or around one cent a pound, so that, as Colonel Sellers said of his famous eye-water, "There's millions in it," if only it could be profitably marketed. But transportation conditions, freight rates, and our own supply are all against the development of old "Popo's" rich stores. Texas and Louisiana give us practically all the sulphur we need for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, the vulcanizing of rubber, and many other commercial uses. We have not only become independent of the sulphur formerly imported from Sicily but have some left over to sell to the rest of the world.

The millions of tons of sulphur already obtained from the volcano have been dug from the crater by the Indians who carried it up rope ladders in bags on their backs. As soon as the sulphur came to the top it was handed over to men who put it on straw mats and slid with it down over the snow to the timber line, whence it was carried by horses and mules to the cars.

The crater is exceedingly hot, but it is so high that its rim is bordered with perpetual snow. Except for the vents spouting gases and sulphur, the floor is solid so that the workmen could move about over it. Now and then water bursts in, and striking the hot places in the floor, causes steam, which rises high over the mountain. But the sulphur miners suffered most from the high altitude and the exposure, and it was hard to keep a force in the crater.

Popocatapetl is next to the highest point on the Mexican uplands, being surpassed only by Mount Orizaba. Kissing the clouds 17,800 feet above the sea, it is the fourth highest mountain in North America. The other two mountains on our continent that are higher are Mount St. Elias and Mount McKinley in Alaska, the latter being over twenty thousand feet. Pike's Peak is more than three thousand feet lower and Mount Washington not much more than one third as high.

I have seen most of the world's great volcanoes. One of the best known is Stromboli, called the lighthouse of the Mediterranean Sea, down the side of which lava is continually pouring. It is near Vesuvius, whose smoky cone is less than one fourth as tall as "Popo." I have been on Vesuvius while it was in mild eruption and have seen the golden lava flowing down in streams so narrow and so hot that one could cook an egg by holding it in a wire basket over them.

Java has so many volcanoes that it is called the fire island. Between it and Sumatra is Krakatoa, the top of which blew off about forty years ago with an explosion that was heard in southern Australia, twenty-two hundred miles off. That eruption took away two thirds of the island, and where the mountain once stood, the sea is now a thousand feet deep. The biggest volcanic crater in Java is in the eastern part of the island, and is known as the Sand Sea. It is surrounded by craters and it has other volcanoes in its centre. I rode across the Sand Sea on a pony, and climbed to the top of the Bromo volcano, which is still smoking.

There are few mountains more beautiful than Popocatapetl and Ixtaccihuatl; or, as they are commonly called here, "Old Popo" and the "White Woman." And there are no others which are at once so high and so easily ascended, or which pay so well for the trip. Both mountains are capped with snow. Standing on one of the Cathedral towers in Mexico any afternoon one can see the snow turned to silver and then to burnished copper by the rays of the setting sun. "Popo" is a little more than a thousand feet higher than his mate, and his form is perhaps more majestic.

Ixtaccihuatl is called the "White Woman" because the snow-covered top of the mountain is shaped like the gigantic figure of a woman lying on her back with her feet toward "Old Popo." As one stands on the Cathedral tower he can plainly see the outlines of the head, the swelling breasts, and the great knees and feet beneath the coverlid of snow.

According to the Aztec tradition, in the days of the beginnings of things a mighty god, named Popocatapetl, came to earth, and fell in love with one of the prettiest of Aztec maidens. The girl had a perfect figure, and her skin was as white as the driven snow. "Old Popo" made her his wife and took her to Heaven to reign with him. She proved too handsome, however, and soon all of the young gods were running after her.

At last "Old Popo" learned that she had been unfaithful to him, and he changed her into this mountain. As she turned to snow and lay on the top of the rocky mass of his creation, he grew remorseful. His heart froze with regret and he assumed the form that he now has. At times he grows angry and spits forth fire and brimstone. The natives say that the earthquakes are his groans and the steam and sulphur fumes his perpetual sighing.

The ascent of Popocatapetl can be made in three days at an approximate cost of fifty dollars. One needs warm clothing, strong shoes, and several good guides. You can ride on the railroad to the foot of the mountain, stopping at the town of Amecameca, which is about a mile and a half above the sea and forty miles south of Mexico City. Getting your outfit and horses here, you can reach a rest house by nightfall. This is at Tlamacas, twelve thousand eight hundred feet above the sea. You will find it bitter cold around midnight and colder still toward morning. You rise early and by seven o'clock are again upon horseback. The guides will warn you to take no breakfast, saying that if you do you will be nauseated as you get to the higher altitudes. Two hours later you will have ascended three thousand feet to about the altitude of Pike's Peak or Fujiyama. Your breathing is now difficult. You debate the worth of your thoughts and whether it will pay to use the strength needed to utter them. Your feet have grown heavy and you cannot walk fast.

The first part of your way is through loose, shifting black sand, and the latter part is all snow. You are soon far up in the clouds above the rest of the world, and if the day is clear you have magnificent views of the Valley of Mexico and the great capital lying in its lake-studded basin. Higher still and the "White Woman" lies below you, while all around are the great hills which are the most striking features of the Mexican plateau. Much of the time you are in the clouds, and now and then you can see them both above and below you. They look like live things, and you can watch them drifting to your feet and chasing each other from mountain to mountain. Now they envelop you in a mist, and then pass onward and upward until they are lost in the crater.

As you rise, the snow, which is wet at the start, grows harder and dryer; near the top there are pinnacles of ice which tear your hands as you pull yourself from rock to rock. The glare hurts your eyes, and you drop down exhausted as you stand at last on the edge of the crater at one of the topmost points on the roof of the North American continent.

If you are very venturesome you can crawl down a short distance into the crater and peep over. The walls are steep and of black obsidian. You can see the yellow sulphur far down below, and the gas rising out of the crevices in the floor. It is difficult to take pictures on account of the steam, and it is dangerous to play round the rim.

Going down Popocatapetl is easy if you have the nerve to take the toboggan slide of your life. When the snow is smooth and hard you make the slide seated on a straw mat, guided by an Indian who carries an iron-shod staff and directs your way through the rocks and crevasses. The Indian sits at the front of the mat and uses his stick as a brake. You sit behind and grab him around the waist. It takes only a few minutes to reach the snow line, for you go down as far in one minute as you climbed in an hour.

In ascending Ixtaccihuatl you may ride a great part of the way. The timber line is about thirteen thousand feet up and the region of eternal snow begins a little more than a thousand feet higher. At the summit you are in perpetual snow, and as you tramp over the "White Woman" you find that she is really a mountain saddle more than two miles in length. Over this saddle Cortes constructed the highway upon which he came into the Valley of Mexico with his band of Conquistadors.

At the town of Amecameca at the base of Popocatapetl is the Sacred Mountain, one of the great shrines of the Indians. In a deep cave here there once lived a most holy man, Friar Martin de Valencia, one of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico who came over in 1524 as missionaries to the Indians. Years after his death, so the story goes, a mule bearing the image of the Virgin stopped at the cave where San Martin's body was buried, and refused to budge another step. This was looked on as a sign from Heaven that the image should go no farther, and so there it is to this day. It is kept in a glass case and every year on Ash

Wednesday is taken from place to place with impressive ceremonies. It is very light and very old and is said to be made of the pith of maize. On Good Friday some of the most devout crawl up the Sacred Mountain on their knees and others stand or kneel for hours in attitudes of adoration. Many hang their unwashed garments on the trees near the shrine so that the spirit of the saint may bless them.

One might call "Popo" the grandfather of the mountains of Mexico, but Orizaba is their monarch. Its snow-capped summit is eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and someone has said that it has "what few mortals possess: a warm heart, with a clear, cold head." Although it is harder to ascend than Popocatapetl, it has been scaled more than once. The first men to reach the top were some of our American officers during the Mexican War, and the next man who went up was a Frenchman. He made the ascent in 1851 and found on the peak a tattered American flag floating from a staff in which was cut the date 1848. A few years later this same Frenchman tried a second ascent and nearly lost his life in the attempt.

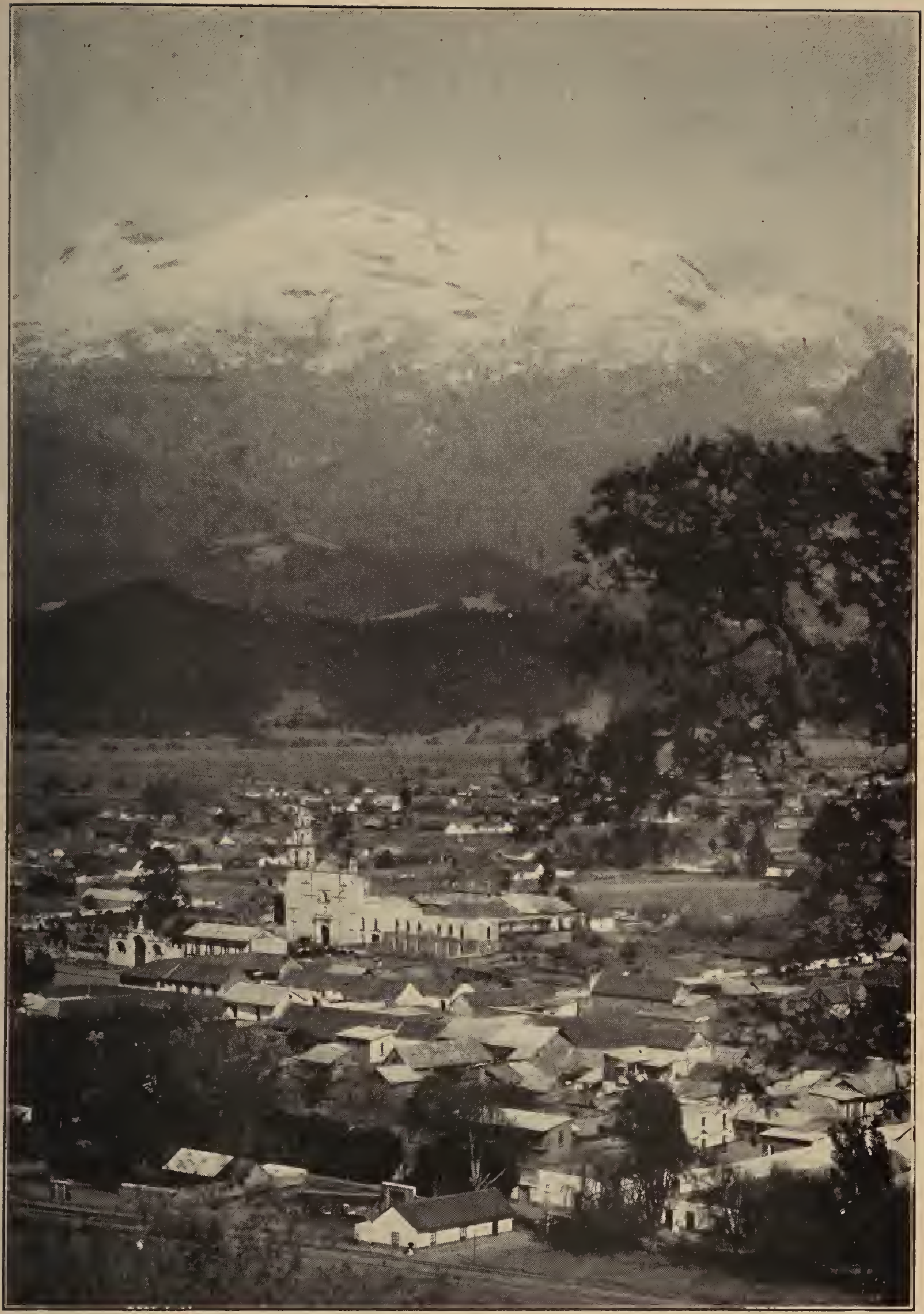
The present starting point for Mount Orizaba is a little village at the snow line, and I am told that there are several dry caves on the way near the trail where one can camp during the trip. The peak is shaped like a great anthill, and an iron cross now surmounts it. There are no avalanches, and one may take a mat and coast down over the hard snow just as on Popocatapetl.

I stopped at Orizaba on a trip from Mexico City to Vera Cruz. The town is as high as the top of the Alleghanies, but it is surrounded by coffee plantations, and the thermometer there was ninety degrees in the shade. The perspiration stood on my face as I looked up at the top of the mountain above me and saw the mantle of perpetual snow.

In addition to these mountains Mexico has many other volcanoes, most of them extinct, but some liable to break out into action. The region about Guadalajara has been troubled with earthquakes and many think that this, one of the largest cities of Mexico, will one day be swallowed up in the earth. About a hundred miles to the southwest of Mexico City is the volcano of Colima, which is more than two miles in height and perpetually active. Near by is a splendid volcanic peak, El Nevado, as tall as Fujiyama and almost as beautiful. Colima is frequently hidden by the dense masses of steam always rolling out of its crater, and at night this steam is coloured with flames. The crater, which is almost circular, has a diameter of about one third of a mile. It is more than one hundred feet deep.

Mount Colima has had many eruptions, and there have been a half-dozen violent ones, accompanied by earthquakes, within the last three centuries. Ashes from it have at times covered the sky for many miles, and even flown as far as Guadalajara, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosí.

One of the queerest volcanoes of Mexico is Mount Jorullo, which is still steaming. This mountain stands in a rich farming district that was once as flat as a floor. One day there was a rumbling of the earth and in the midst of a great estate of indigo and sugar a volcano shaped like a great bladder arose to a height of one thousand seven hundred feet. It then burst. The mud poured out in sheets. Clouds of steam filled the sky, and all the coun-



According to the Indian tradition, when the god Popocatepetl found that the beautiful Aztec maiden he had taken to heaven as his wife was unfaithful, he turned her into the mountain shrouded in snow called the "White Woman."

Puebla, said to have been laid out by the angels, has for four centuries been a stronghold of the Catholic faith. It has sixty churches and some of its people still kneel in the streets when the archbishop's carriage goes by.

try about was covered with rocks and ashes and molten lava.

Two large streams were swallowed up by the eruption, and some distance away two new rivers appeared. The eruption continued for nearly a year, and now steam issues here and there through cracks in the earth.

CHAPTER XXIV

PUEBLA, THE CITY OF THE ANGELS

I AM in Puebla, the City of the Angels, in a great hotel which once was the palace of a landed aristocrat but is now open to every stranger who has the price of a room. As I look out upon the clean streets, the hum of one of the busiest cities of the Republic falls upon my ears, yet the odd-looking people and queer carts make me think I am in a far-off corner of Spain rather than in one of the chief manufacturing cities of Mexico. Puebla has cotton and flour mills, glass, soap, and paper factories, and it turns out much of the cheap pottery that one finds for sale in every part of the country. It is said to be the cleanest and most healthful city in Mexico. The streets are well kept and the sanitary regulations are strictly enforced. Most of the buildings are a cream-white, but some are tinted in different shades, so that the whole town gives a pleasing effect of varied colours that harmonize with each other.

Politically, the name of the town is Puebla de Zaragoza, in honour of the Mexican hero of the time of the French invasion. On the maps it is simply Puebla, which means "town." To the Mexican it is Puebla de los Angeles, or "City of the Angels." Soon after the Conquest the Spaniards wanted to set up a town between the capital and Vera Cruz. Its location was decided by a devout Franciscan monk who saw in a dream a beautiful plain between two lofty snow-white peaks. Upon it were angels with measuring rods and other surveying instruments who proceeded to lay off the ground as if for the streets of a city. When the friar awoke he went in search of the plain, which he found at last in the shadow of Popocatapetl and Ixtaccihuatl. And here in 1532 with Popocatapetl and the "White Woman" looking on, was built Puebla de los Angeles, at one time the second city of Mexico. While the Cathedral was being erected, it is said the angels came by night and put up a part of one of the towers. At still another time, so the people will tell you, they appeared in a great host hovering over the city.

With such evidences of heavenly favour it is no wonder that Puebla became a stronghold of the Catholic Church, and is such to this day. When the Church Party was at its height and before the Reform Laws of Juarez four fifths of all the property in the city belonged to the Church. Even to-day there are among its population those who kneel in the streets when they hear the wheels of the Archbishop's carriage.

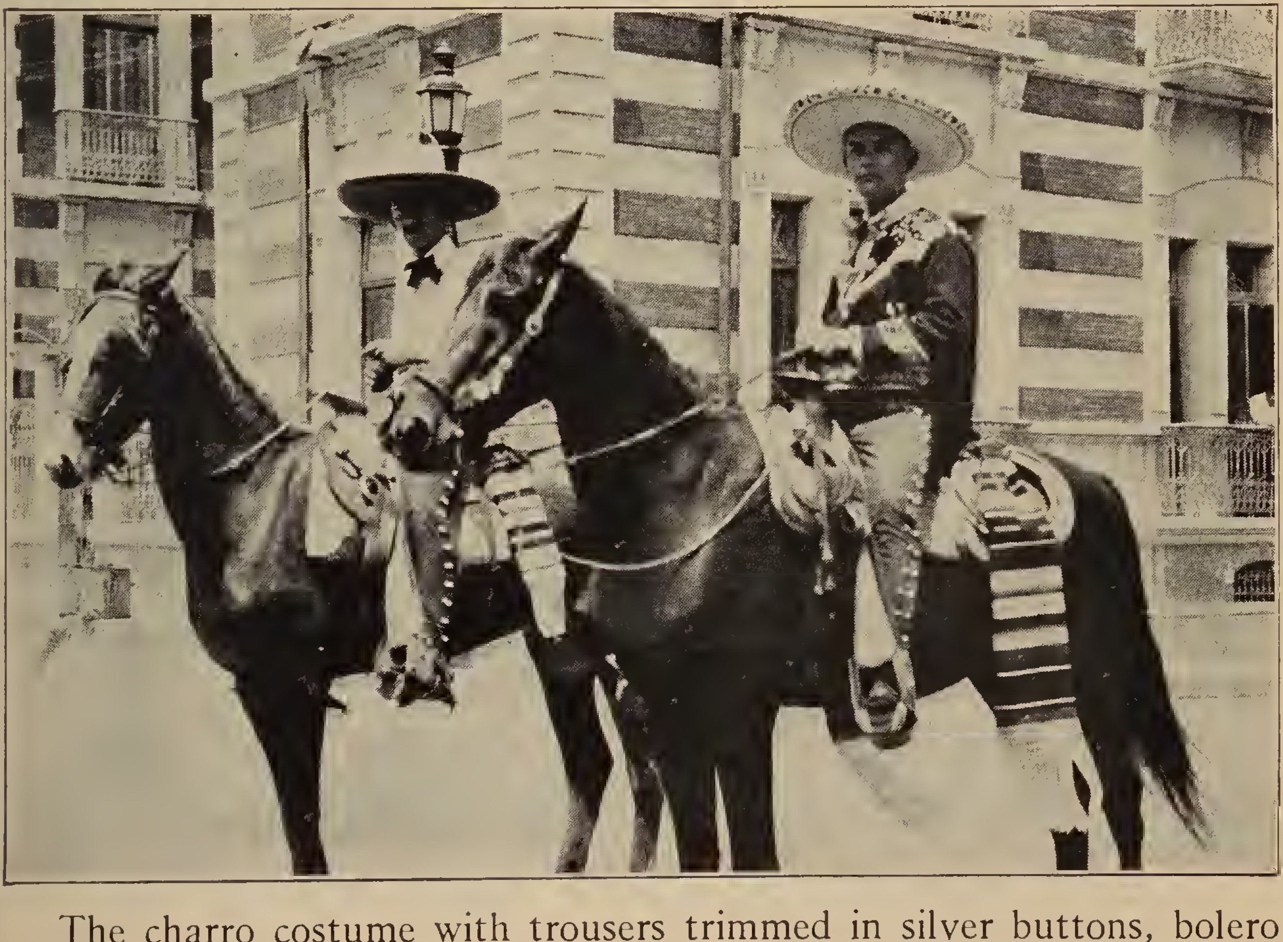
I don't know about "the angels" at Puebla, but I can testify that it is a city of churches. There are more than sixty of them, or one for every two thousand souls, while the Cathedral is regarded by some as the finest on the whole continent. Certainly it surpasses in its gold and glitter the great Cathedral of Mexico City. The high altar, a wonderful combination of gilded pillars, marble statuary and green onyx, cost more than one hundred thousand dollars. There are a score of chapels which have in front of them great grilled screens of wrought-iron as high as a haystack. The iron is covered with gold as bright as that the dentist puts into one's teeth, and there are gilded columns by the dozens, and hundreds of massive gilded candlesticks, each as tall as a man. The immense roof, which extends like a vault over the whole, is rich with gilt; the pulpit is of the purest onyx, carved artistically and trimmed with gold, and a great gold canopy hangs above it.

And then the paintings and the carvings! Some of them are equal to those of any of the great cathedrals of Europe and fully as costly. Each of the fourteen chapels has half a dozen or more pictures in frames of gold, carved like those of Florence, and there are acres of cherubs and saints in the most brilliant colours.

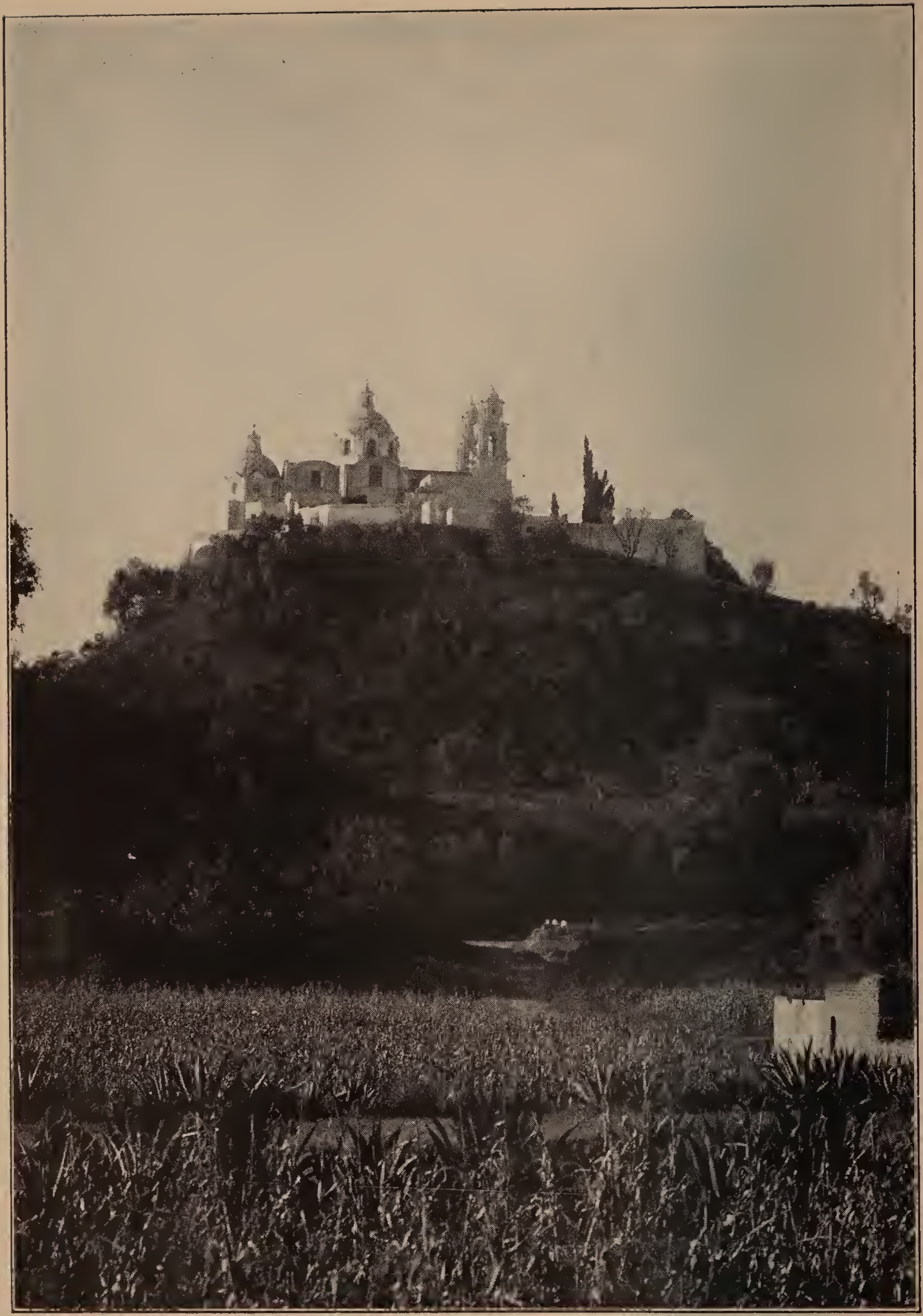
The walls of the chapter room are hung with old Flemish tapestries woven after designs by Rubens, representing scenes that are anything but sacred. These now priceless tapestries and thirty-two old Spanish chairs were presented to the Cathedral by the Emperor Charles V. Perhaps he was grateful to Puebla for its activities in the time of the Spanish Inquisition, when a number of "pestilent Lutherans" were put to death. Some fifty years ago, when the old House of the Inquisition in Puebla was remodelled, several skeletons were found in walled-up cells. They were doubtless the remains of men buried alive because of their Protestantism.

Now let us take a look at the worshippers and see what sort of people support this great cathedral. There is one of them kneeling on the floor. The penitent has on his whole wardrobe, a cotton shirt and pantaloons. As he kneels the soles of his feet, covered with rude leather sandals, are turned upward. Upon his back hangs the great load of pots he carries from one place to another for less than a dollar a day. He has never received more than this,

Puebla is distinguished among Mexican cities for its cleanliness. Having waxed fat in the old days on trade with Spain, it became a centre of conservatism and fanatical religious devotion.



The charro costume with trousers trimmed in silver buttons, bolero coat, bright sash, soft shirt, and elaborate sombrero is still worn by some *rancheros*, or small private land owners. From this class have come many of the revolutionary leaders.



A chapel to Our Lady of Healing now stands on the pyramid at Cholula, which was built by a people who were here before the Aztecs. They erected upon it a temple to the god of light.

but, as in the past, one tenth of his earnings goes to the Church. It is the poor Indians who keep the churches alive and it is they who are the devout people of Mexico. Their offerings amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and though the property of the Church has been confiscated again and again, it is always restored by the gifts of the masses.

In the Church of San Francisco, not far from the Cathedral, there is a little image of the Virgin, said to have been carried for years by Cortes, who presented it to a member of the Aztec imperial family upon his conversion to Christianity.

This church is decorated with tiles peculiar to the architecture of Puebla. They were made by the natives who were taught by potters whom the Dominican friars brought from Toledo, Spain, just after the Conquest. The Indians soon became noted for their fine wares, and glazed tiles made at Puebla were used for decorations throughout Mexico. Some of the old houses have façades of tiles set in mosaics of saints, birds, and animals.

Long before the conversion of the Indians this district was a religious centre for all Mexico. At Cholula, eight miles away, are the ruins of one of the greatest pyramids of the world. The Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt, which I have climbed, covers about thirteen acres and its top is about the size of a croquet ground. The Pyramid of Cholula was one hundred and seventy-seven feet high and had a base fourteen hundred feet square. Its flat summit measured more than an acre. Cholula itself was a city of one hundred and fifty thousand and held somewhat the same place among the Aztecs as did Puebla among the Mexicans of a later period. It was a sort of Mecca for pilgrims.

At some time and by some people unknown this great pyramid was raised. The Aztecs found it here when they came. It was built of sun-dried brick, limestone, and clay. On its top was a great temple to Quetzalcoatl, the white god of light and agriculture, who paused here for twenty years on his way to the coast and taught the people the arts of civilization. Then all mankind was happy, the air was sweet with perfumes and filled with the melody of birds. The earth produced fruits and flowers without cultivation and even the cotton took on the richest of colours. But one of the principal gods grew angry with Quetzalcoatl and he was forced to leave the country. He departed, saying he would one day return. And so when Cortes appeared the people thought him their "fair god" come back at last. At first he was worshipped by some, but the treachery and cruelty of the Spaniards soon dispelled the illusion.

In the temple of Cholula was an image of Quetzalcoatl, which Prescott thus describes:

> He had ebon features, unlike the fair complexion he bore upon earth. He wore a mitre on his head of waving plumes of fire, a resplendent collar of gold around his neck and turquoise pendants in his ears. He had a jewelled sceptre in one hand, and a shield, curiously painted, the emblem of his rule over the winds, in the other.

Besides the great temple on the pyramid, Cortes counted four hundred shrines in the Indian city and said that it was his desire to replace each of them with a Christian church. He must have succeeded for to-day Cholula has a church for about every one hundred of its population. The church on the site of the temple has a great dome covered with glazed tiles of green, white, and yellow. It is dedicated to Our Lady of Healing, and in it are many offerings of those who have been miraculously cured by her. In the vestibule are paintings showing such scenes as a man in front of an oncoming train being snatched away by the Virgin, just in time to save his life.

The mighty pyramid has long since crumbled to pieces, and the grass grows over its ruins. The little town at its base has barely ten thousand people. It is full of beggars, and noted only as the site of the great Aztec shrine. No effort has been made to preserve the pyramid. A tramway cuts through it. Much of it has been levelled, and the ground is now planted to Indian corn.

Standing upon the site of this ancient monument, I saw the smoke of the steam-engine as the train on the Interoceanic Railroad went whizzing by. It gave a shriek as it passed, voicing, as it were, its defiance and contempt of the pagan structure. It was indeed a symbol of the power of the present over that of the past.

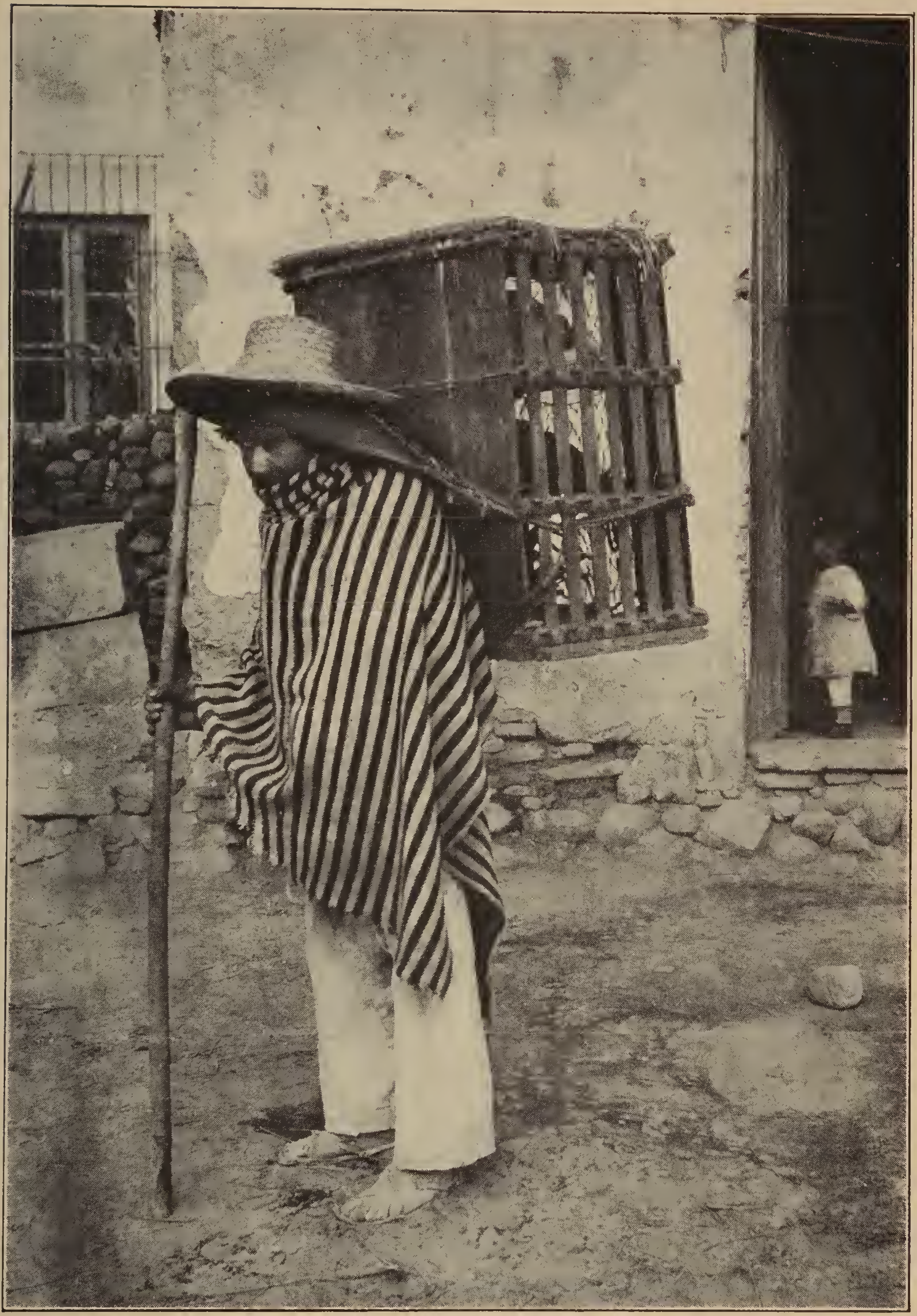
CHAPTER XXV

JALAPA, THE BEAUTIFUL

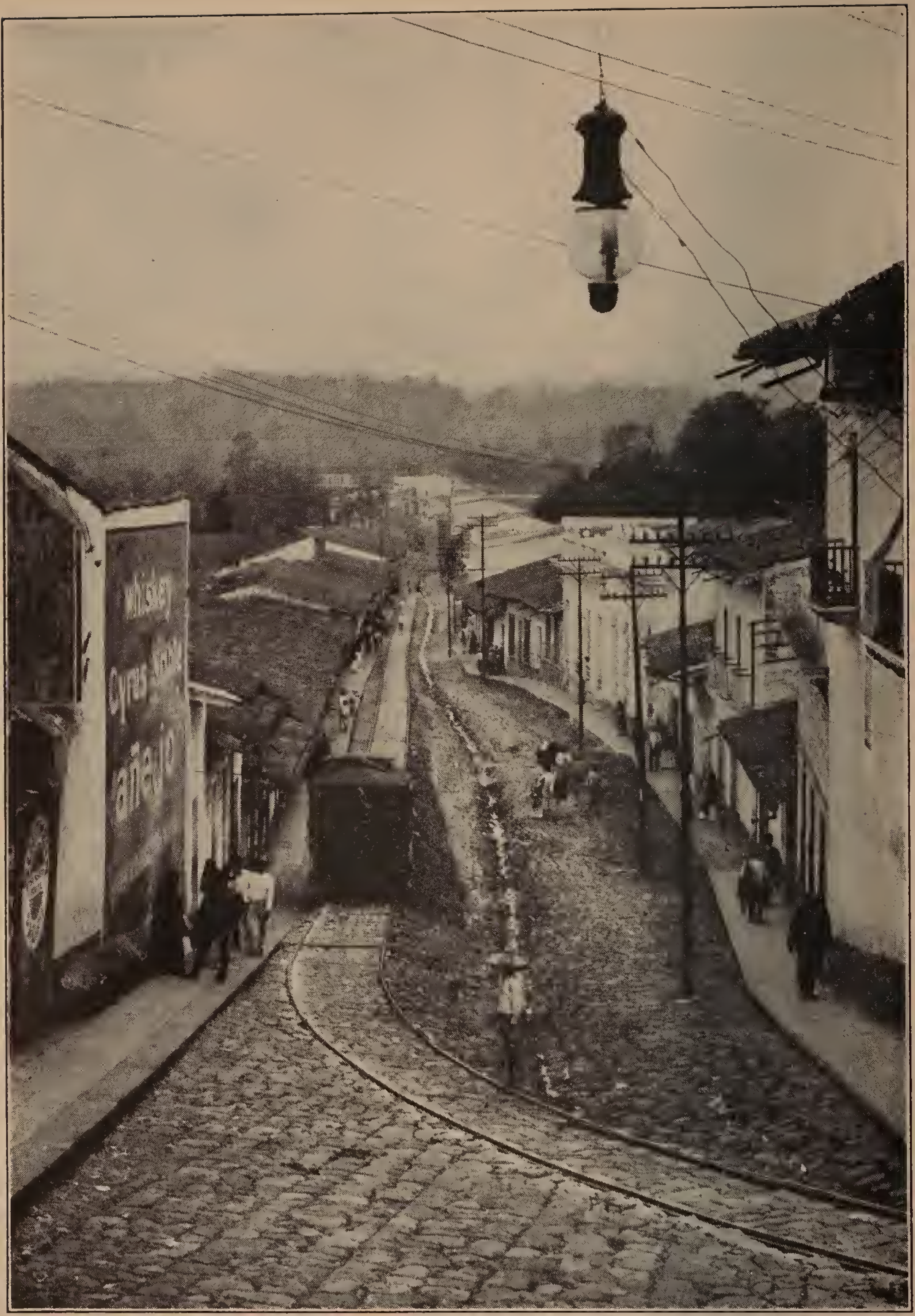
ORIZABA, the highest peak in Mexico, looks down at me from under its cap of perpetual snow. I am in the mountain city of Jalapa. The clouds nestle in the hills above and below and the vegetation about is the greenest of green. The town has as much rainfall as the cities of Ireland, and the moist, warm air keeps everything growing.

Jalapa is perched nearly a mile above the sea, on the edge of the great Mexican plateau. It is about twenty-five miles inland from Vera Cruz and is the capital of the state of that name. Next to Puebla, it is the biggest city on the line of the old National Road, which was a post-route in the time of the Montezumas. From that day to this Jalapa has been a trade centre. It is now the market of one of the richest coffee regions of Mexico. Coffee plantations lie all around it, the business is profitable, and many of the people are rich.

I wish I could give you a picture of Jalapa. Time has brought but few changes and it is one of the quaintest and most picturesque cities of Mexico. It has narrow streets which run up the hills and then dive down into the valleys and turn and crook and wind about with all the intricacies of Rosamond's Bower. The streets are bordered by two-story houses of stucco with roofs of red tile and walls coloured in rainbow effects. Oftentimes there will be



The peon of the plateau muffles himself in his serape during the chilly morning hours. In the frequent cold drizzles at Jalapa he remains wrapped up all day and devoutly prays, "Holy Mother, let the sun come out!"



Time has brought few changes to Jalapa, perched a mile above the sea on the old National Road over which Cortes marched to the capital of the Montezumas. Its stucco houses of various tints with red-tiled roofs and overhanging rafters of sky-blue give a charming effect.

several colours on the same house. A strip of Venetian red a yard wide may be close to the ground, with a cream or gray or brown strip above reaching to the under side of the projecting roof of red tiles which has rafters as blue as the sky.

Looking up a street overhung by these azure rafters one finds the effect charming. I am even more pleased as I study the houses built in the old Spanish style. Great windows barred with long rods of iron are set into walls and run down almost flush with the pavement. In many, the glass behind the bars has been taken away and the passer-by looks into big rooms floored with shining red tiles, and furnished with tables and straight-back chairs set stiffly against the wall. The ordinary Mexican house is a tier of rooms around a courtyard, or patio. In Jalapa the patio is always a garden with a fountain playing among the flowers and trees. One sees the sparkling of the falling water amid the green as he looks through the iron bars of the windows.

The Jalapa girls have wonderfully beautiful eyes, and their dark cheeks rival the moss rose. They are tall and straight and as plump as partridges at harvest time. They have an international reputation for beauty, and "Bewitching and alluring are the girls of Jalapa" is a Mexican saying. Although they are modest, I find them not prudish, and have caught a picture of one or two with my camera. They seem to consider the picture-taking more of a joke than anything else.

Jalapa, like every town in Mexico, has its public square, or plaza. The plaza is filled with beautiful trees. It has marble seats and a stand where one of the best bands of Mexico plays in the evenings. At this time the pretty girls come out and sit on the marble benches, or stroll about, arm in arm. Meanwhile the men promenade back and forth and cast sheeps' eyes at the girls.

During my stay here I have been driven out to Coatepec. This is a typical Indian pueblo, seven miles from Jalapa in the centre of some of the best coffee plantations. Let me give you a few of the pictures I saw on the trip. The road was that over which Cortes marched with his troops, and General Scott led his American army when he captured Mexico City. Near Jalapa it is wide and paved with cobblestones. A thick vegetation grows on each side of the highway, and the stone fences that line it are as moss-grown as those in southern Ireland about Cork and Killarney. The fields are full of the signs of prosperity and grass as green as that of Old England covers the hills. Here is a man ploughing, and a cut in the field shows me how deep is the rich brown loam. It is odd to note the different stages of the same crop in fields side by side. Here is one with the corn in the ear, and there in another the sprouts are just shooting out of the ground. This soil will produce two crops of corn a year with but little or no fertilization.

Now we pass a coffee plantation. The glossy green trees are shaded by tall, wide-leaved banana plants. The coffee trees are full of ripe red berries showing out of the green. Here is a Buenas Noches tree thirty feet high and crowned with great red flowers, and over there are trees filled with blossoms of the same size and shape as the calla lily. Below the trees are the long tendrils of the Mexican love-plant which have wrapped themselves around the moss-covered fences. The light rain in which we set out ends in a sunshower and the diamond drops glisten on the emerald leaves of the dark coffee trees.

We get our first sight of the Mexican orchid as we enter a forest a few miles from Jalapa and as we go onward see orchids covering the trees and hanging down in great bunches. There are more than a hundred varieties, of all shapes and colours and on all sorts of trees. We might have a carload for the picking, for they hang over the road and fairly load down the branches of the trees on which they grow. Birds of the brightest plumage fly in and out among these beautiful flowers and mocking-birds whistle as we pass. In places the vines have intertwined and looped themselves from tree to tree, so as to form a continuous arbour. Sometimes they have choked the life out of the trees, which have become dead supports for the vine masses.

Some of the new fences along the road were made of American wire, fastened to cactus plants. I noted also fences of poles tied together with withes. We passed many huts of cane and thatch. The cane walls were built of poles, and thatch laid upon poles made the roof.

Outside the towns, the poorer people of this region of Mexico live very cheaply. I shall not forget a call I made upon a small coffee planter. Although he had a grove of many acres, his home was a hut about twenty feet square, made of sunburnt bricks and roofed with red tile. The ground formed the floor. The whole family slept in one room. There were three beds upon two of which children were lying. As I entered a chicken sprang out from a saddle in the middle of the floor, and flew between its master's legs out through the door. The man asked me to be seated, and he was not averse to showing me his house and plantation. From this parlour and bedroom combined he took me into the kitchen. Here there was a sort of clay range at one end, and a little Mexican baby in a cradle hung from the rafters at the other. The two rooms made up the house, and the furniture consisted of the beds, half-a-dozen chairs, a table, and some earthenware cooking pots.

Leaving the house my host took me out to look over his little plantation. The coffee trees ranged in size from sprouts to trees from six to eight feet high. But for the fact that they are carefully pruned, they would grow to a height of from fifteen to twenty feet. They have dark green leaves, and bright red berries, the seeds of which are the coffee of commerce. The crop is now ready for picking, and the Indians are moving to and fro among the plants gathering the fruit. The planter tells me that the average tree produces only one or two pounds a year, but that some yield as much as three, four, and five pounds. The trees do not begin to be profitable until they are five years old. The plants are started in a nursery and then transplanted; they begin to bear at about three years of age.

Coffee and chocolate are the two popular beverages of Mexico, but I do not find the coffee particularly tempting. This, I think, is the fault of the makers and not of the bean. A strong essence is prepared by the drip method, the liquid being poured through the grounds again and again. The only good coffee I have had has been at private houses. All I get at the hotels tastes as though it had been cooked a half-dozen times, or perhaps saved from last week, while that served at the restaurants makes me think of the Brazilian saying, that good coffee should be "as black as ink, as bitter as death, as hot as hell, and as sweet as love." As far as these attributes are concerned, the Mexican hotel coffee certainly excels, save that it is often cold when brought in. In the country districts a wine bottle of cold essence is often placed in the middle of the table and everyone helps himself. The usual method is to pour hot milk and coffee into the cup at the same time.

The chief beverage, however, is chocolate, and almost anywhere in the country one is pretty sure of getting a good cup of it made in the Mexican fashion. After the chocolate is brought to a boil, sugar and milk are added, and the mixture is then stirred with a wooden beater whirled between the hands. The result is delicious.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOUSE-BUILDING IN MEXICO

I FIND all Mexican cities much the same. Except in the main thoroughfares few of the sidewalks of the larger towns are wide enough for two persons to pass along together. Both residences and stores are built close to them and there are no bay windows or other projections save the iron-railed balconies on the upper floors of the houses of two or more stories. Occasionally, as in Jalapa, the roofs hang over the sidewalks so as to ward off the rain from those passing beneath.

As there are few blinds and no shutters to speak of, one can usually look through the iron-barred windows into the houses and see their rather stiff but scrupulously clean interiors. All the better houses of the country are built the same way. There is practically no individuality in architecture in Mexico. The rich man's house in Jalapa is put together in the same way as the rich man's house in Guadalajara, and the retailer of San Luis Potosí or his brother merchant of Mexico City have the same kind of business buildings. Only in recent years have the Mexicans begun to build themselves detached houses on the edges of their cities. The houses in the *colonias,* as the new suburban residential districts are usually called, are more on the order of French villas than like ours.

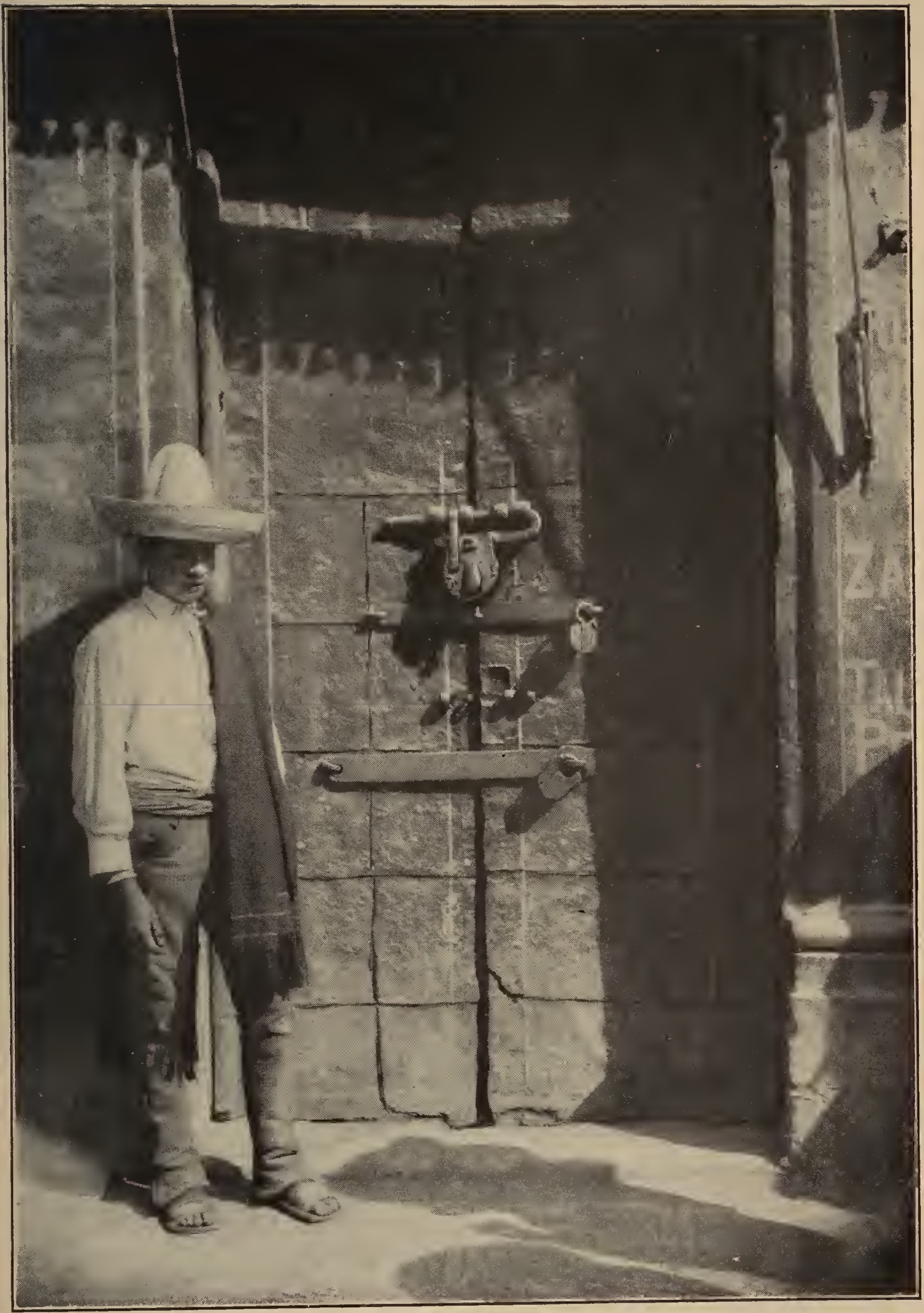
I have watched the building of a number of Mexican houses. They are all on the Spanish plan with one- or two-story tiers of rooms around a court roofed by the sky. There are few houses in the country which are more than two stories high, though there are some built of stone and brick after the American style. Where there is room, the buildings are spread out over the ground instead of being built up into the air as with us, and they are peculiarly well adapted to the climate. In some of the houses the walls are from two to four feet thick. They are made of sun-dried brick and plaster. After the wall is laid the side of the house facing the street is covered with stucco, which is smoothed down so that it has an even surface. This is tinted a light blue, bright yellow, gray, or drab. The combinations of colours walling the two sides of a Mexican street give the cities a gay appearance. The interior walls are finished much as ours are, except that they are seldom papered and are usually painted or kalsomined. Mexican rooms are bright with many-coloured frescoed designs. The rooms are usually large and the ceilings very high. The houses have little ventilation save from the front windows. When there is a double tier of rooms, one opening on the street and the other on the court, there is no means by which to get a draft through the rooms.

In the big hotel at Jalapa I have a room with a ceiling so high that it makes me think the room has been turned up on end. The only ventilation is a hole over the door. I am on the second story, but the floor, nevertheless, is of brick laid in plaster. A cold chill runs up from my heels to my head when I get out upon these bricks in the morning. In some of the more modern houses wooden floors are laid and rugs used, though carpets are seldom seen, because of the dampness during the wet season.

There is little wood employed in building. Iron of all kinds has to be imported and after it has paid the tariff and the various freights the cost is almost prohibitive. The result is that beams are sunk deep into the mortar and the stone floors are laid upon them. The staircases are of stone and brick. String and rope here largely take the place of nails. If the Mexicans put up a scaffold about a building they tie the planks to poles or studding with great ropes and splice one piece of studding to another with a light line. These scaffolds do not look at all safe, but I am told that they are stronger than if they were fastened together with iron. I found this same use of ropes in building common in the Far East and even in Belgium and France. In Japan I saw a scaffolding leading up to the roof of a six-story building. It was made of thousands of rafters and poles which formed the walks and pathways up which materials were carried to the roof. In the whole there was not a single nail, rope and cord being used instead. Here in Mexico but few of the boxes are nailed together and crates for carrying goods are usually tied.

At one of the biggest mines of the country, the houses of the owners of which were built of sun-dried bricks and mortar, I found the night watchman had made a house for himself out of soap-boxes. These were not more than two feet square, but he had saved the pieces and tied them together to posts so that they covered the walls and roof of his house.

The typical Mexican home has few of the modern conveniences. Where there is a bath it is generally a big, gloomy room into which the sunlight never enters, with the floor of tiles or cement and a drain in one corner.



Forbidding are the doors of Mexican homes and places of business. Set in walls four feet thick, fastened with huge locks and double bars, each usually has also its portero, who is guard and janitor combined.

The native hut may be poorly built and have a leaky roof and a floor of flea-infested dust, but the kitchen arrangements are often a triumph of ingenuity. Although it may not look it, this kitchen is completely equipped.

The occupants of a better-class house usually spend much of their time in the tiled, high-pitched corridor that surrounds the patio, from which all the rooms, except those facing the street, are entered.

There is a shower bath for the warmer season and a metal tub for the cool months.

I met a fellow American in a hotel here the other day and asked him how he got along with his Spanish. He said he had only learned three words. Pointing to his face, which he had shaved in such a way that the cuts upon it made me think of a lamb sheared by an amateur farmer, he went on: "I had to learn these words to get my water for shaving. They are *agua muy caliente,* and they mean 'hot water, damned hot.'"

However much one may want to be on the ground floor in Mexican investments he does not want to live on the ground floor of a Mexican house. None of the houses has any cellar, so that the lower floor is often damp. As a rule the better classes sleep on the second floor, and the ground floor is given up to the servants.

The house of the average well-to-do man has a big metal-studded front door, which looks more like the entrance to a church or a hall than to a private residence. It has a great lock, and the older houses have door-knockers of curious shapes. The porter opens the door, and you see as you go in that he lives in the room at the side of the entrance. You may turn from here to the second floor or you may have to cross the court to reach the stone stairway leading to it.

Upstairs the ceilings are from fourteen to twenty feet from the floor, and the roof sometimes juts out over a balcony built in front of the second-story rooms and looking down on the patio. If it does it will pay you to look at the rafters. They are laid and cut in as many different shapes as though they were in Japanese temples. In Jalapa I have dined in a court, or little patio, roofed with rough rafters of the most delicate sky-blue, which in contrast to the Venetian red floor and white walls were most striking.

Most of the Mexican roofs are flat, and the water spouts are a characteristic feature of many of the towns. In some places, such as Aguascalientes, they thrust out over the street in the shape of great round tiles, and in others they are built out from the wall. Sometimes they are made of clay, and look as queer as the gargoyles of a mediaeval cathedral. Nowhere have I seen any of tin or iron. The spouts often stick out over the patio toward which the roof slopes.

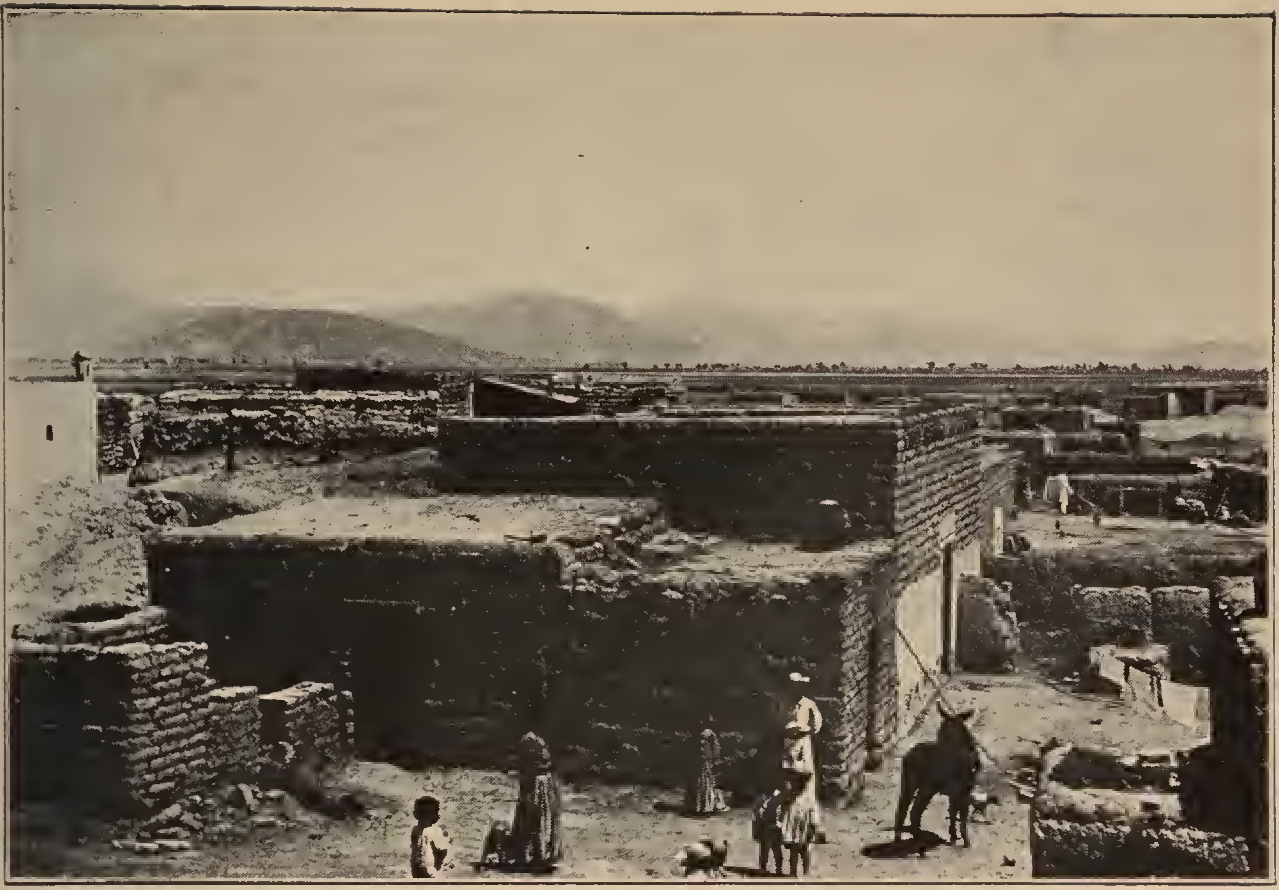
The roofs, which are very thick, are practically fire- and heat-proof. Great wooden beams are first put across the top of the thick house walls and set into them. On the top of the beams are laid planks coated with pitch which are covered with a layer of earth an inch thick; over the earth is applied a thick coating of gravel, and the whole is finished off with cement so that it is as smooth as a floor, and one may walk on it without injuring it. Some of the roofs are paved with bricks, and many of the larger buildings of the city are finished in this way. A low coping rises about a foot or more above the average Mexican roof. As the housetop is often the gathering place of the family in the evening, flowers are kept blooming on it, and on a street where the dwellings are of about the same height one can go from one to the other on the roofs.

Mexico has neither cooking stoves nor base-burners, and the fireplace and the grate are practically unknown outside the capital. The people think that fireplaces are unhealthful and most of the cooking and heating of the country is done with charcoal. As to hot water and steam, I should hate to risk my reputation for truthfulness by telling the average Mexican that such things are used for keeping people warm in our country. And as to supplying the nation with stoves from America, practically all the houses would have to be constructed differently to admit of their use. I remember on my first visit here I found that the American consul at San Luis Potosí had set up a battered old stove in the ante-room between his office and his living room, but he had to run the pipe out of the window, and though the heater made him comfortable it looked very much out of place.

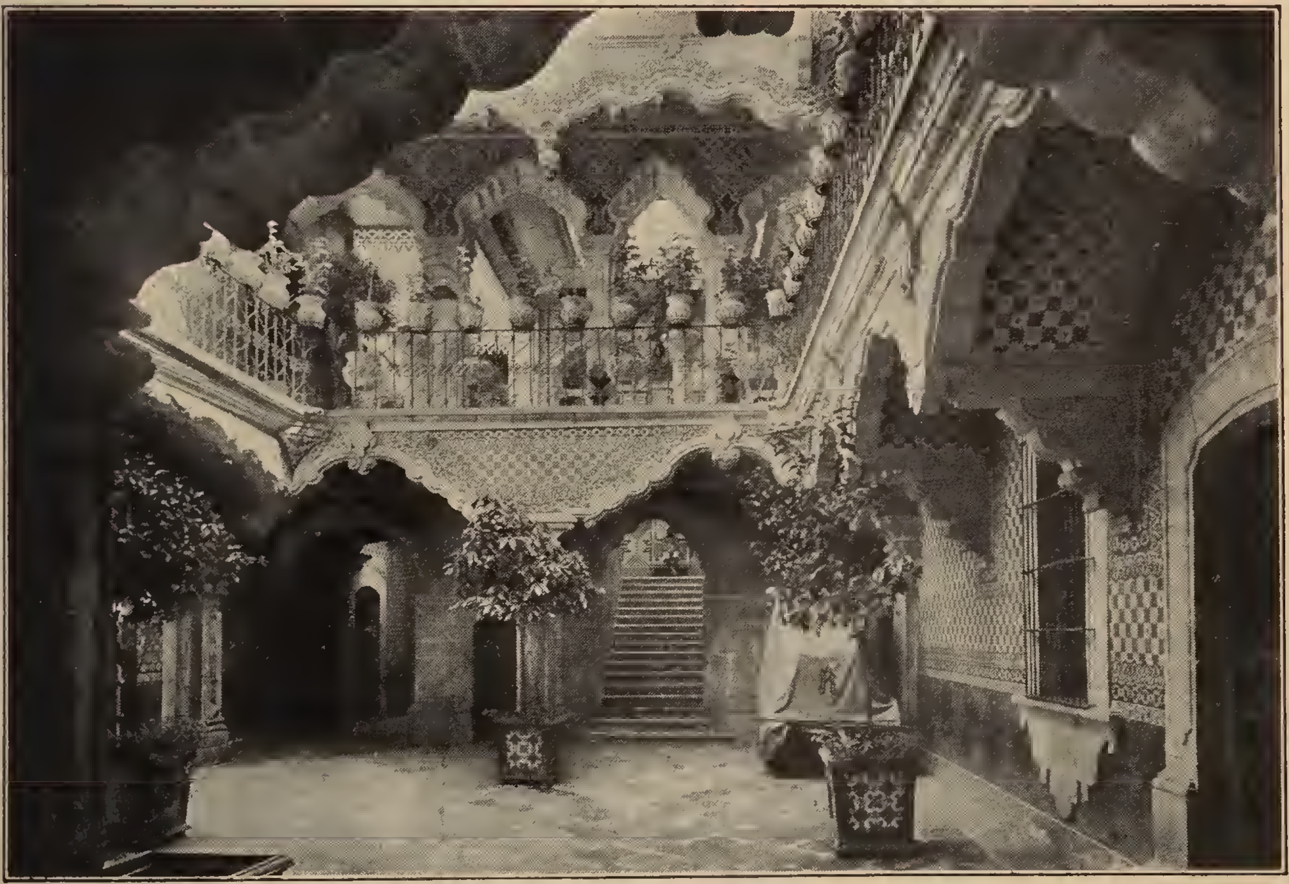
Mexico City, with its hundreds of big men, its scores of millionaires, and its more than half a million people, has but few houses that are properly heated, and I doubt if there are a hundred buildings in all Mexico which are heated by steam or hot water. None of the houses has any stoves to speak of, and in looking down upon a dozen Mexican towns I have yet to see any chimneys, excepting those of the factories.

The other day I heard of an American who asked his landlady if he might have a fire in his room. She replied that he certainly might any time that he wanted one. But he found no provision for a fire, so called on his landlady once more. "Why, build it anywhere you like," said she, pointing to the tiled floor.

Occasionally the foreigners bring in oil stoves, which are a comfort in the chill of the mornings on the high plateau. But even the stranger soon learns to imitate the native habit of standing the first thing in the mornings in front of a wall facing east so as to warm up with a sun bath. The houses of brick and stone built after American designs with thin walls and no patios, which are quite numerous in the capital, have been found unsatisfactory by the Mexicans. Fireplaces in such dwellings cannot take the place of the sun-warmed courts, while the thin walls are not resistant alike to the cold of winter and the heat of summer.



On some of the huge estates of the Mexican plateau the owner lives in a luxurious home or squanders his wealth in the capital or in Paris. Meanwhile he houses his peons in windowless hovels of sun-dried brick.



In the olden days the city homes of wealthy Mexicans often had shops on the street floors. Now the downstairs rooms are sometimes used as servants' quarters and garages, the family living in the rooms opening on the balcony around a patio.

Once the starting point of Spanish galleons laden with silver wrested from the conquered Aztecs, Vera Cruz is to-day the chief port of a free people through which they exchange goods with the rest of the world.

The *hacendado* of the rich hot lands of Vera Cruz lives in one of the garden spots of the earth. Large scale operations and much capital are required for profitable cultivation of coffee, sugar, and rubber.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE FRONT DOOR OF MEXICO

FOR four hundred years the low-lying beach and curved harbour of Vera Cruz have formed the porch and front door of all Mexico. Here successive conquerors gained their first footholds, and from here they fought their way into the country and over the mountains to the heights of Mexico City.

The city is still the chief port of entry for passengers and goods from Havana, New York, and Europe. More than one fourth of all the imports pass through its custom house, which collects duties that average a million pesos a month. Tampico, because of its enormous output of oil, takes first rank in tonnage of shipping, but Vera Cruz is the most important for the export of other Mexican products and also as an inlet for miscellaneous goods. Now that Mexico is tied to the United States by several lines of excellent railways, many Americans cross our southern border and enter by the back door, but Vera Cruz, founded by Cortes, gives most visitors their first view. In the course of a year, the flags of all maritime nations may be seen in its harbour, and for steamers of several Atlantic lines it is a regular port of call.

Although it has borne the brunt of repeated attacks from the sea, and submitted to a series of occupations by foreign invaders, Vera Cruz remains to this day one of the most typically Spanish cities of Mexico. Seen from the harbour, its low buildings seem hardly to rise above the ocean level, while behind and around it are vast stretches of green plains. Its waterfront has docks wonderfully constructed of great blocks of stone, and so long, that a walk to the end of them is a tiresome trip under the blazing sun.

Their equipment includes giant cranes, railroad tracks, and every modern device for loading and unloading cargoes moving by ship or by train. The port works, as well as the asphalt-paved streets, water supply, and sewers, were put in by an English firm, and it must be conceded that they did a good job. Many a larger town in the States has fewer modern port facilities and an uglier waterfront than this ancient entrance to the present-day Mexico.

Until Vera Cruz was cleaned up it had frequent epidemics of yellow fever, and travellers hurried on to the highlands by the first train available. Before the harbour was improved shipmasters dreaded to call on account of the "northers," strong winds that sweep down from the north from November to March. These usually last from two days to two weeks, and during that time both the sea and the sky are a dull leaden gray and seem to be trying to lash themselves into fury.

Behind the docks and the waterfront buildings begins the old city with its walls of pink, blue, and white. The narrow streets are now well paved and clean, but in the past open sewers ran through them and they were the dumping ground for all sorts of refuse. The only scavengers were the buzzards which flocked here in such numbers that they darkened the sky. They are still here, although they have to work harder to pick up a living. The roof of the market building is lined with them and they swoop down for such food as drops on the streets. They also perch on the carts carrying garbage and fight with each other for the contents.

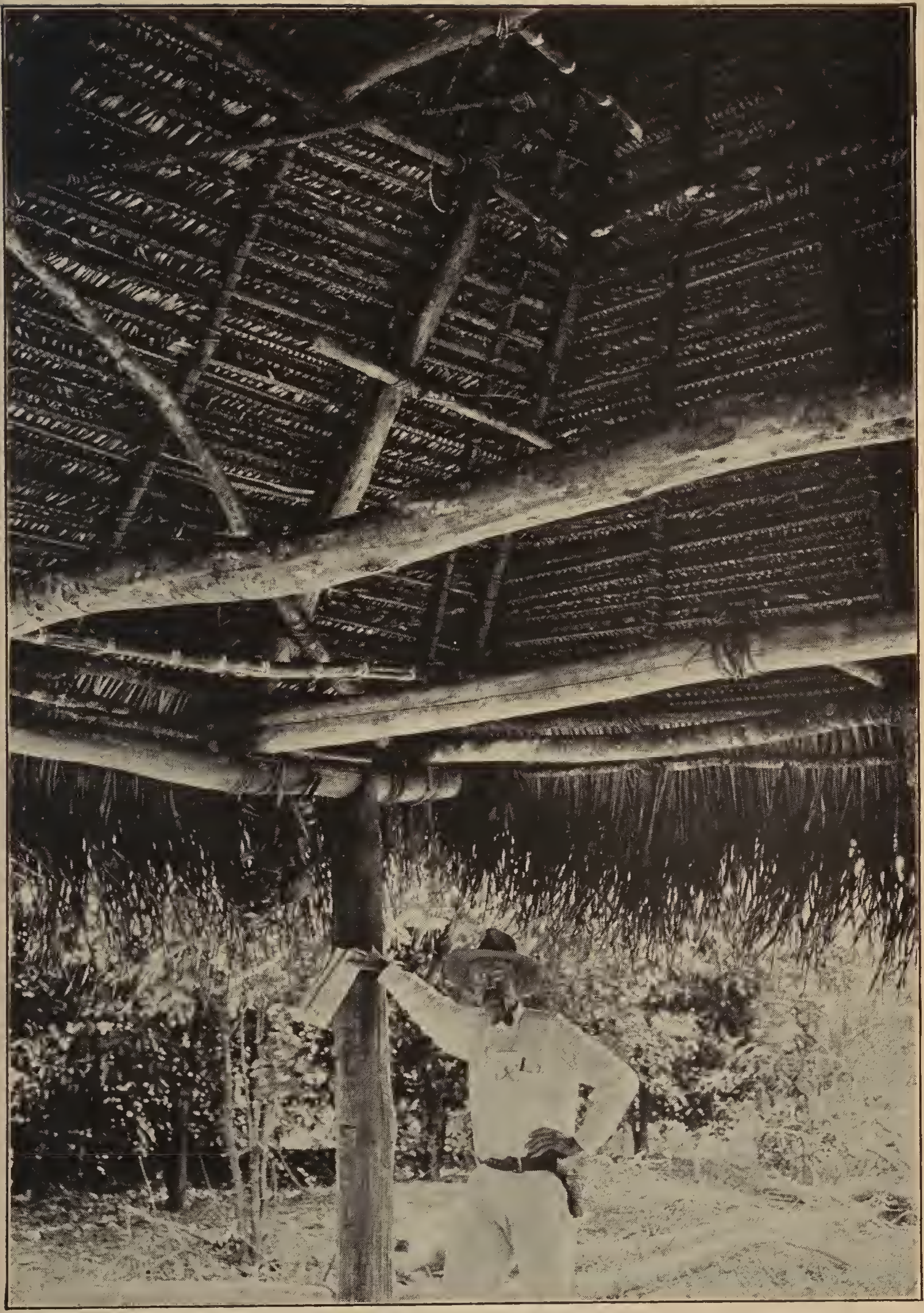
A walk of a few squares from the docks brings us to the plaza. It is nearly four centuries old, but not very imposing. It is faced on two sides by hotels with wide porticoes where leisured Mexicans and foreigners sit at cast-iron tables drinking beer from Orizaba, or perhaps something stronger. The municipal building extends along the side nearest the harbour, while on the fourth side is the parochial church. The band plays every evening among the palms of the plaza, and here doubtless many a political plot has been hatched and its details worked out under cover of the music.

But suppose we sit down in the portales. We have a table with both the shade and the breeze and need not regard the hot sun that blazes down all around us. We are sitting not far from the spot where Cortes first claimed all Mexico in the name of his king. The day he landed was Good Friday, the day of the True Cross, Vera Cruz, and he gave the place that name, which it has borne ever since. Later he moved his camp to higher ground a mile farther inland, and it was on those very hills that the United States troops pitched their tents and stood sentry during our occupation of this city in 1914.

It was with his own countrymen that Cortes had to fight first for his hold on Vera Cruz. The Indians were friendly and helped him make his way up to the Aztec capital. But the governor of Cuba, jealous of the successes of Cortes, sent over to Mexico a second expedition under a leader instructed to assume full command. He landed at Vera Cruz while Cortes was still in the capital and took possession of the fort, the first the Spanish had built. When Cortes learned this he hurried back to the coast by forced marches and, attacking by night, was victorious. He then merged the second army with his own small command and led both back over the mountains to the valley of the Montezumas. During Queen Elizabeth's reign the fort was again captured, this time by an Englishman, Sir John Hawkins, who was later driven away by the arrival of a new fleet from Spain.

As the city grew in wealth from its rich traffic with Spain, it repeatedly fell prey to the pirates infesting the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Vera Cruz children are still frightened into being good by the story of one band of sea robbers which kept fifteen hundred of the townspeople locked up for four days in that very church on the other side of the plaza while they looted the city. Another pirate, himself a Spaniard, put three hundred men, women, and children on an island in the bay, and left them to starve—a horrible sacrifice even in those cruel days. From this the place takes its name, Sacrificios Island.

Nearly a century before the *Mayflower* pilgrims landed at Plymouth, the Spaniards began to build the fortress that for hundreds of years was the key to this city and, I might say, to all Mexico. This was San Juan de Ulúa, one of their first strongholds in Mexico and the last place the Spanish gave up when driven from the country. It covers practically all of a small island about a mile from shore, forming one of the best examples on our continent of the work of the military engineers of old Europe. It has the fittings of a castle of the Middle Ages, including a



Nails are but little used in Mexico, either by skilled carpenters or Indian hut builders. Poles for scaffoldings or the frames of houses in the jungle are tied together with ropes or withes.

The filth of four centuries was removed from the fortress of San Juan de Ulna when it got its first scrubbing during the American occupation in 1914. Many of its dark dungeons lie below sea level.

Since Vera Cruz has been made more sanitary, the buzzards that used to infest its streets have had a harder time of it. But the market still furnishes them with fair pickings.

moat, and its walls are joined at various angles so that the attackers at any point are exposed to two streams of gun fire. The walls are of dingy white stone, and so massive that they seem a part of the rock. At the corners they are surmounted with little domed cupolas, big enough to hold a sentry on duty, while slits for lookouts and rifles and large openings for cannon threaten on every side. Vast fortunes were spent in building the fort, the foundation alone costing two million dollars, while the total bill sent to Charles V at Madrid was twenty times as much. One day the Emperor was asked what he was gazing at so intently in the west. "I am looking for San Juan de Ulúa," he replied. "It has cost so much that we ought to be able to see it from here."

Inside the fort is a great paved court, with the walls rising to the height of two stories above. Here the garrisons were drilled and prisoners executed. Around the court are all sorts of rooms, with walls, ceilings, and floors of stone. Of its many dark dungeons, some were sunk below the level of the sea. Instruments of punishment and torture were in regular use, and untold numbers of prisoners dragged out their lives in the darkness and damp of the cells. Even up to recent times, the fortress has been used as a prison, both for criminals and for political offenders, and only a few years ago were its dungeons sealed up, never to be used again.

San Juan de Ulúa got its first bath in the American occupation of Vera Cruz in 1914. At that time it was given a good cleaning and scrubbing, and the dirt and filth of four centuries were removed. This was the second time the Stars and Stripes flew over the old fortress, as in 1847 an American fleet carrying General Scott and his troops bombarded and captured San Juan and the city. The French held it twice, once in 1838 and again in 1861, when, with Great Britain and Spain, they seized the customs house of the city.

Many of the older buildings of Vera Cruz bear the scars of these repeated attacks. To see the latest we need walk only a block or two from our seats facing the plaza down to the naval academy. Its pink stuccoed walls were shot full of holes by the guns of Uncle Sam's warships when Huerta ruled in Mexico City.

In Mexico's century of revolutions, as well as in foreign invasions, Vera Cruz has always been a most important factor. Here about the middle of the last century Benito Juarez and his troops held out against a rival government in Mexico City, and here some years afterward Porfirio Diaz was secretly landed to begin his march to the presidency. More than a generation later another Diaz, General Felix, a nephew of Don Porfirio, occupied the city and set up a government in opposition to Madero.

There are several reasons why Vera Cruz is a preferred spot for starting revolutions. One is its accessibility by sea, affording a convenient landing place for the political exile seeking glory. It is also the seaport nearest the capital, being only two hundred and sixty-five miles from Mexico City. But perhaps the chief reason is that its customs house offers a supply of the sinews of war, the first need of the revolutionist being cash. He who sits in the box office has the best chance of running the theatre, and the Vera Cruz customs receipts are always enough to maintain a small army.

Ever since the day of Cortes the road from here up to Mexico City has been the highway to power. It has also served as an avenue of escape. When the political atmosphere of the capital gets too hot for a president or one of his opponents, a night ride in a Pullman drops the fugitive from the heights down to the Vera Cruz docks, with their steamers for Havana, New York, or other ports of refuge in France or Spain.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BY MULE CAR TO THE SEA

IN MY first travels in Mexico I made a trip down to Vera Cruz from the highlands that cannot now be repeated. Starting from Jalapa, I rode for seventy-two miles in a street car, leaving at seven in the morning and arriving here at three in the afternoon. Most of the way was downhill, and our speed averaged twelve miles an hour, although the return journey up the mountains took twice as long. Now the same distance is covered in comfortable trains which go back and forth in about the same time.

I was one of the last Americans to make this journey by street car, as the Interoceanic Railway was then nearly completed. It was a mad, wild race down the mountains with a peon driver behind four lively mules. They galloped through jungle, orange groves, and pineapple beds, from the cool coffee uplands to the coast plain, hot and humid. The car contained six benches for seats. It was only about fifteen feet long, with a platform in front where the driver stood holding his whip and lines.

Our road was that over which Cortes marched with his troops, and which General Scott took when he led his army up to the capture of Mexico City. It had been in existence for hundreds of years, and until the building, first of the light railway, and then of the steam roads, was almost the sole means of communication between the

Mexican coast and the capital more than a mile higher up in the mountains. Over it the swift runners of the Aztecs carried their messages, and up its slopes toiled generation after generation of Indians, in ceaseless procession, their backs bent double with burdens of every description.

Near Jalapa the road is wide, rugged, and cobbled. We came on a dead gallop up to the house where Santa Anna, the man our General Scott defeated at Cerro Gordo, made his headquarters. When he was the dictator of the Republic, Santa Anna owned hundreds of thousands of acres along this highway. We rode for perhaps fifty miles through the plantations he once held. His former home is a hollow square of long, low buildings, surrounded by thatched huts in which live descendants of the Indians who were practically his slaves.

It was here that we made our first change of mules. Then the driver cracked his whip and away we went. He seemed to rejoice in every fresh team and had no mercy on the animals that pulled us along. He had a whip twenty feet long, the crack of which sounded like a pistol, and, uphill or downhill, he thrashed his mules, keeping them on a dead gallop all the time. He especially delighted in whipping his steeds as we passed the peons on the road, and he was the admiration of the dark-eyed Indian girls. The man wore the whitest of white cotton clothes, and his pantaloons fitted his legs as closely as a ballet girl's tights.

The Indians of the hot lands below Jalapa are different from those of the Mexican plateau. They wear fewer clothes, and in fact some of them wear nothing at all. I saw many naked babies, and under one palm-leaf roof half a dozen men slept with nothing but breech clouts upon them, while the sun shone in through the slits in the roof and painted their skins a varnished mahogany-brown. Many of the women were bare-armed and bare-bosomed, and their long black hair hung in braids down their backs. As they looked out of their thatched huts some of them really seemed almost beautiful.

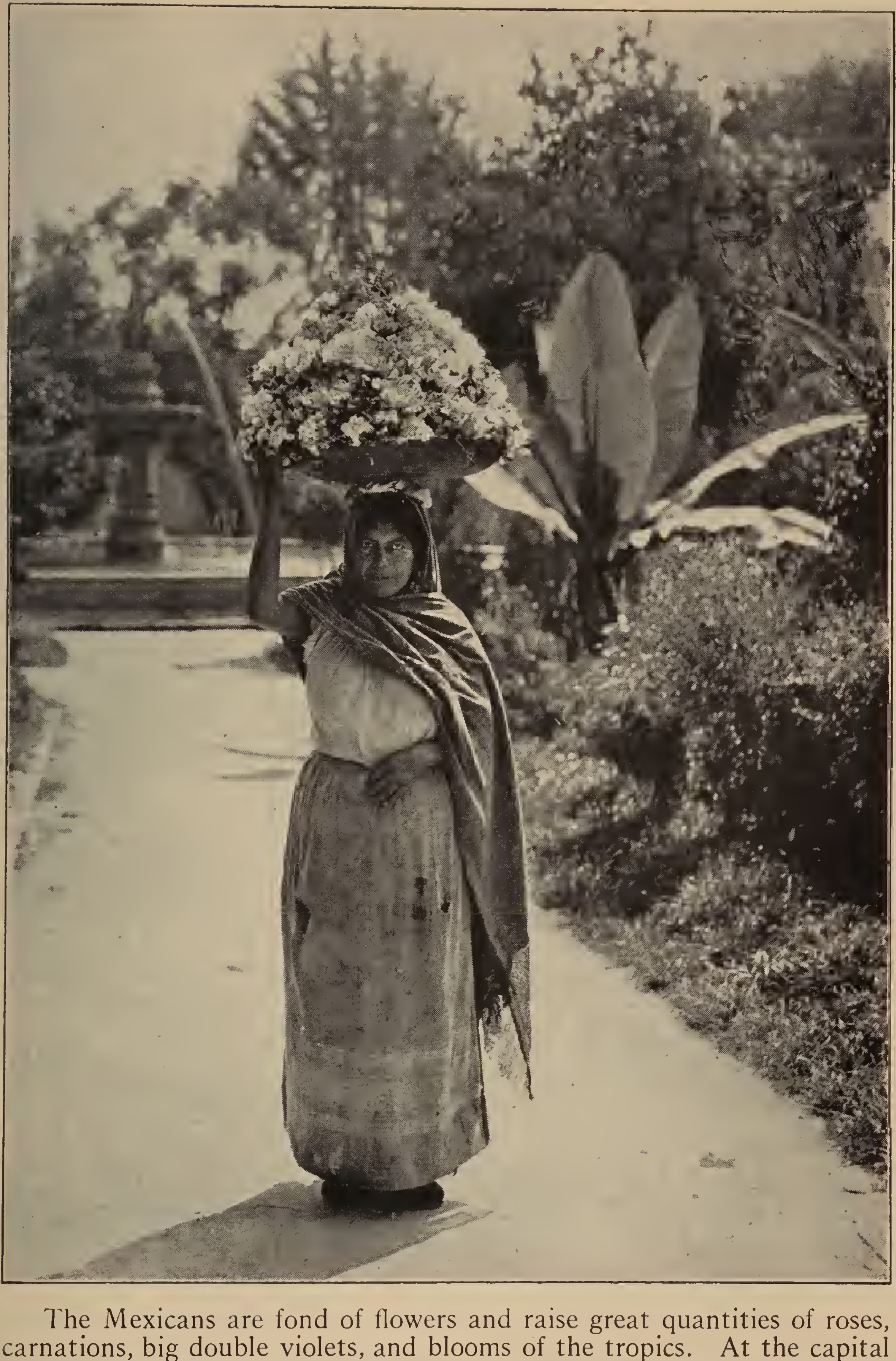
The Indians of Vera Cruz, especially those near the coast, are said to be the laziest in Mexico. The climate is so hot and damp that it is enervating. The soil is so rich and food is so plentiful that they can live almost without working. Even the houses are cruder than elsewhere in Mexico, the natives evidently seeing no reason why they should trouble themselves to build any better. Some have but one room, in which men, women, and children, married and single, sleep on the bare ground together under the same shelter of thatch. Many of the huts have no doors, and we caught many weird sights as we went by. The people cook without stoves over fires built on the floor, and the smoke finds its way out of the hut as best it can.

We took our dinner at Rinconado, eating with a dozen Mexican farmers, who wore their black sombreros at the table. A pretty Mexican girl with a black scarf round her head sat opposite me and smoked a cigarette after her meal, and hungry-eyed Indians looked curiously through the windows and watched us as we ate.

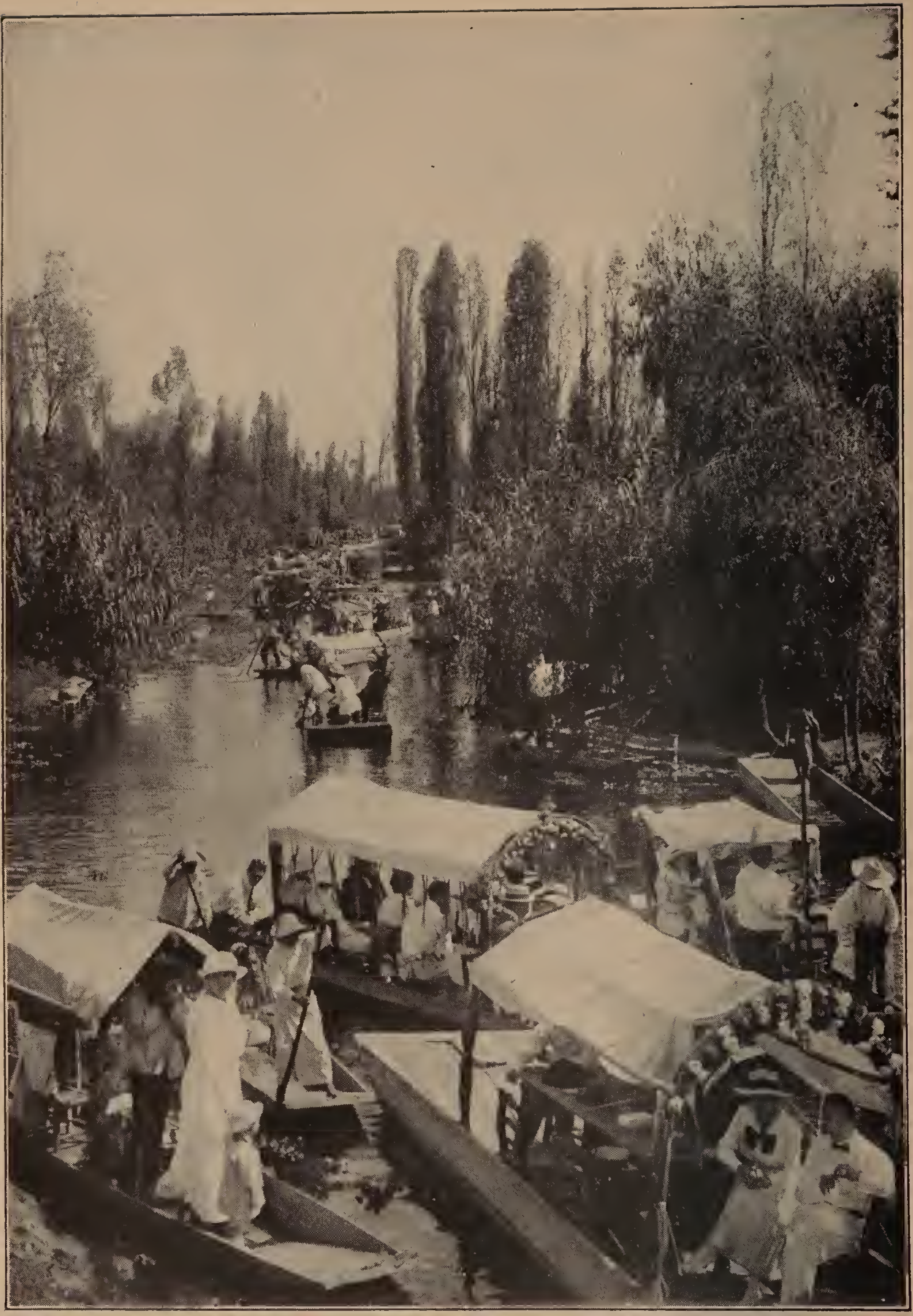
Leaving the station we passed a boy ploughing in the jungle and I noticed that his wooden plough was pulled by oxen, which were harnessed to it by the horns. Everywhere in the fields and in the houses we saw signs of the many superstitions of the Mexican peasants. Most of the corn and wheat fields had crosses stuck up in them to keep the devil out of the crops, and many of the thatched huts had crosses covered with flowers and paper stuck in their roofs or in the ground hard by.

The vegetation changed as we descended the mountains and entered the coast plains. We passed by great trees hung with the pods of the vanilla bean, and palms with clusters of cocoanuts. In climate and resources the State of Vera Cruz is one of the most varied in all Mexico. Its natural products include those of both the tropical and sub-tropical zones, and it is the principal coffee-growing state in the Republic. The annual coffee crop of Mexico amounts to about one hundred million pounds, two thirds of which is exported to the United States. Coffee is one of the chief exports of Vera Cruz, and this with the export of oil and the customs on imports makes the city and state the principal source of income of the Mexican government.

Vera Cruz is a most interesting state. Its southern end rests on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, famous for its transcontinental railroad which competes for traffic with our Panama Canal. One may go from Vera Cruz to the capital by the Mexican Railway, which traverses one of the most picturesque parts of Mexico, or by the Interoceanic, which follows the route Cortes took, and passes through beautiful Jalapa. Both roads are marvels of railway engineering, and the journey is speedy and comfortable. In my estimation, however, neither trip can compare in interest or in grandeur with my ride in a street car down from Jalapa. Within the borders of the state are many peaks of the Sierra Madre, including the highest of all, Mount Orizaba, while its eastern edge is washed by the blue waters of the Mexican Gulf. On the north it extends to the Panuco River, the harbour of the great oil port of Tampico. To the south of the river lie the bulk of the producing oil fields.



The Mexicans are fond of flowers and raise great quantities of roses, carnations, big double violets, and blooms of the tropics. At the capital flowers are especially cheap and abundant, and on sale every day in the year.



At Xochimilco pleasure parties throng the water passages between little green islands, which, because they were formed of masses of vegetation drifting on the lake surface, came to be called "floating gardens."

CHAPTER XXIX

FLOATING GARDENS OF XOCHIMILCO

BACK in Mexico City once more, I have spent today upon the lakes and canals that wind about through the once floating gardens of Xochimilco. The gardens do not float now but in days gone by they drifted from one place to another and the people here say that in some of the upper lakes there are islands that will bob up and down if you jump on them. Historians record that there were thousands afloat in the days of the Aztecs and that Cortes found Texcoco, the lake nearest Mexico City, covered with them.

During the thirteenth century an Indian tribe, the Xochimilcas, drove the Chichimecas out of this region and established themselves here in an empire which was part land and part water. Later on the Spaniards had considerable trouble in routing them from their island stronghold. Many of the old canals on which the Indians used to paddle their dugouts have now been filled in, but there are still three main canals and several smaller branches.

Once, the chief of these, the Viga Canal, was dotted with floating gardens practically all the way in to the city markets. But now for several miles its banks are bordered with breweries and other factories which pollute the stream and make the waters anything but agreeable for travel. Besides, the canal is here choked up with water lilies, so that the Indian boatmen can make little headway. It is at Xochimilco, which means "the place where the flowers are," that one really sees the best of the *chinampas*, as the floating islands are called.

These floating islands were made of mats of interlacing branches of trees covered with a thin layer of soil. Upon them plants were set out and tiny huts built. Where the water was not more than ten or twenty feet deep they were anchored to the lake bottom by willow poles driven through them down into the mud. These poles took root and year after year as the soil thickened the floating masses became the permanent islands we see to-day. Many of the islands are only about twenty feet wide, and some are separated from one another by waterways not more than six feet in width. They remind one of Venice or Holland and to me are among the great sights of Mexico.

My trip through these islands was in a flat-bottomed, gondola-like boat which was poled along by an Indian boy at the stern. We passed great flower beds that were masses of bloom; roses and lilies and pinks by the million. The water was covered with tiny leaves the size of a pin-head and we floated through these green highways with acres of flowers on both sides and great overhanging trees shading our way. Now and then we came to a vegetable farm, where the waterbound patches of black earth were filled with cabbages, or heads of green lettuce. There were dozens of fields of beets, of carrots, and of round artichokes like those I have bought on the Mediterranean. Some of the farms grew only onions, each almost as big as the head of a baby. Here and there I noticed men at work in the fields, and saw that most of the cultivation was by mattock rather than with spade or plough.

My peon boy boatman was not the least interesting part of the picture. His eyes were as dark as the rich ground over which we passed, and his skin was as yellow as the great golden carrots which, dropping from boats loaded for the market, had here and there fallen into the water. His teeth were as white as the snowy turnips in the boats that went by, and his short bushy hair of jet black was so stiff that it almost raised his hat from his head. He picked many flowers for me as we stopped from time to time, and upon my saying that I was hungry, he landed near a thatched hut and brought me some delicious *tamales* still piping hot in their corn husks.

Many other boats passed us. Some were filled with vegetables, some carried picnic parties, and others were floating refreshment stands. Peddlers, both men and women, paddled or poled their way up and down the canals selling things to eat and drink. Some of them had great jars of *pulque,* others *tamales* and *tortillas*. Near the city much peddling is done from boats to the retail dealers whose shops are so close to the canal that the prows of the boats can almost reach into the stores. The whole scene reminded me of the floating homes of Bangkok and the rivermen's craft of Canton, on which more than one hundred thousand people spend their whole lives.

While in the boat I looked in vain for the water flies, said to have been one of the delicacies of Aztec gastronomy. It may not have been the proper season, or it may be that I did not strike the breeding beds. The Spaniards who came over with Cortes reported that the Aztecs ate a kind of mud made into cakes. This mud is believed to have been a mixture of the fly eggs which the Indians of the Valley of Mexico still enjoy. They also mash the insects themselves into a paste, which they boil in corn husks and offer for sale in the markets. Sometimes hens' eggs are mixed with the flies' eggs to make a paste which is sold in cakes.

As the female flies usually deposit their eggs on reeds, the Indians plant rushes along the marshy banks to attract them. They gather the eggs by pulling up the reed stalks and shaking them over a sheet.

In winter the lakes are thick with wild ducks which feed on these flies. The birds are killed by methods that our hunters would consider most unsportsmanlike. They are often slaughtered by guns in batteries arranged in three tiers one above the other, so that birds not killed on the first shot are brought down as they rise from the water. The Indians are said to have a still more economical way of bagging their game. The duck-hunter hollows out a pumpkin or a big squash, cuts slits to look through, and, putting this over his head, wades out up to his neck in the water. Slowly working his way into the midst of a flock of the unsuspecting ducks, he catches them by the feet, one at a time, and kills them by wringing their necks.

The Indians who work the floating gardens and lands along the Viga Canal and its branches are different from those in the city. They are full-blooded Aztecs and are said to speak the ancient tongue. They are remarkable for their cleanliness, and are proud of their lineage and the fact that they have not mingled their blood with that of other races.

In the bottom of Lake Xochimilco are springs of pure water, fed perhaps by the snows of "Popo." One of them supplies part of the water of Mexico City, flowing about eight million gallons in twenty-four hours. Near it at Xochimilco stands a pumping station of the city power company, and hard by, in the midst of olive trees, pines, and flowers, a great pool of cold crystal-clear water bubbles up from the bottom of the lake. There are also several good outdoor restaurants, which are well patronized.

The Mexicans of all classes love to spend a day in the country, and almost every Sunday people of high and low degree plan picnics. The upper classes visit each other at their haciendas, but the peon of the capital often begins his outing with a trip in a scow hired from an Indian market gardener and ends it with a meal under the trees followed by dancing. On moonlight nights the canals are full of boats loaded with family parties, music tinkles from guitars, and young people give themselves up to love-making as freely as any on a Coney Island steamer.

CHAPTER XXX

A LOOK AT THE MARKETS

LET us follow some of the boats down the Viga Canal to Mexico City and visit the markets where the produce of the floating gardens and farms is sold. The markets are among the finest in North America, and I doubt whether better vegetables and fruits are anywhere to be had. Nearly every vegetable can be bought all the year round, and owing to the great variety of the climate, the fruits include apples, peaches, and pears as well as oranges, bananas, pineapples, lemons, and mangoes. A pineapple as big as my head costs me ten cents, and two fairly good oranges are sold for one cent. Porters go along with great baskets of fruit on their heads, and, as we look, one of them, carrying two bushels of pineapples, slips and the great rosy fruit rolls over the floor. No one laughs as the natives help him pick up his wares.

Some of the most interesting peddlers are outside the big market. Here the streets are lined with booths where Indians are selling wares of all kinds which they have brought in from the country. Here is one man who has cups, saucers, and carafes, all made of burnt clay. He has also pottery, toy plates for the children as big around as a cent, and cups the size of a thimble. Near him is a peon with clay savings banks in the form of little red pigs with slots in their backs, and next is a man peddling whistles. The whistles, which are of black clay, make as shrill a noise as that of any policeman's whistle of nickel. They sell at two for a cent.

A little farther on is a man peddling rat traps made of steel hoops, and beside him are two Indians, selling turkeys, which are slung over their shoulders. I price the great birds and find I can have one for five dollars. We weigh it and it kicks the beam at twelve pounds.

But here comes a porter with a load of wrapping material tied to his back. It consists of bundles of dried corn husks and will be used by the butchers and other market people to wrap up small purchases. Every market man and woman keeps a stock of corn husks on hand, and the great load borne by the peon will be easily sold.

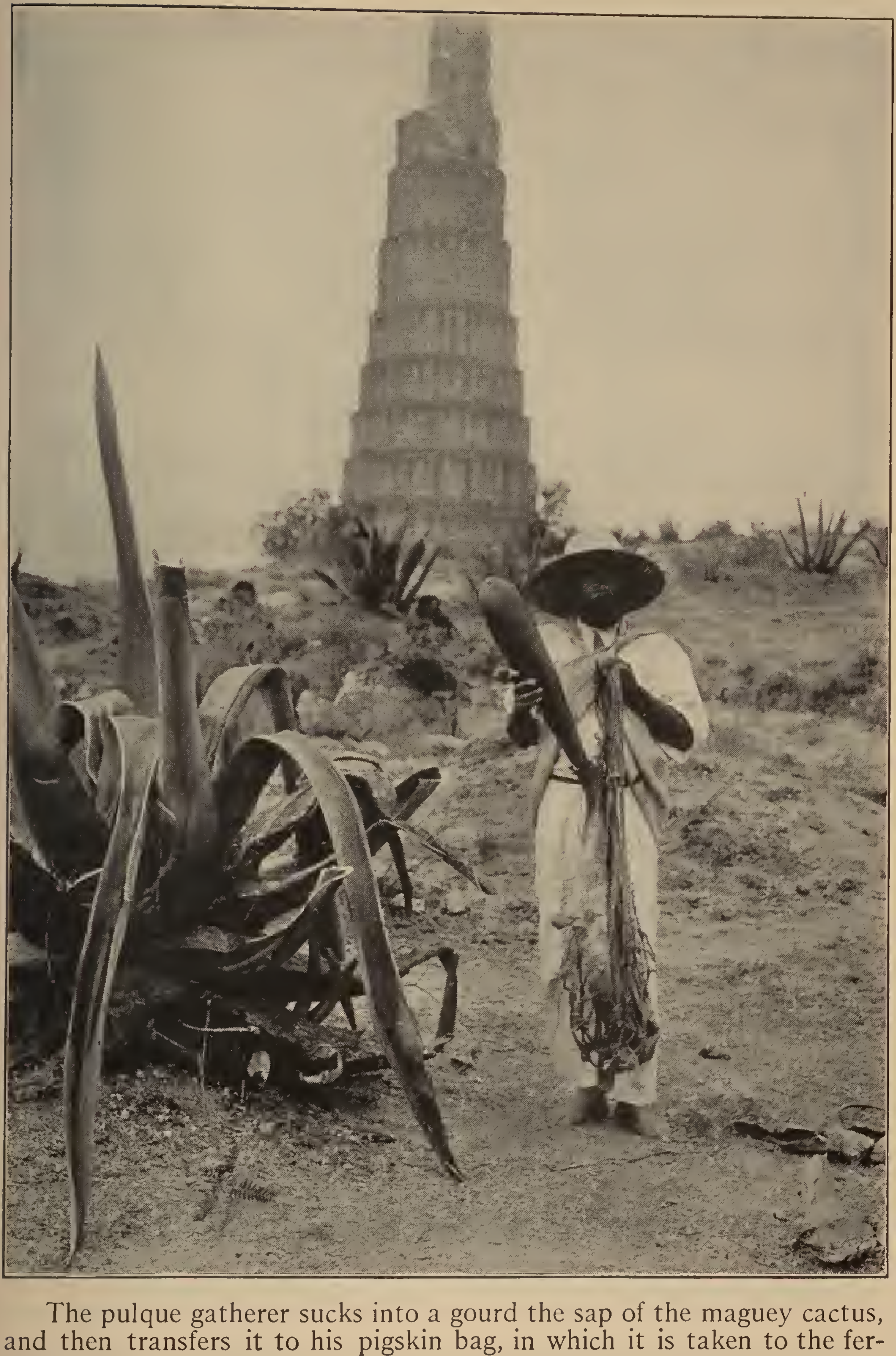
There are even peddlers selling game cocks. There is one now. We can see only his legs, which move along under the great framework of baskets covering his back and reaching high over his head. Out of each basket waves the tail of a cock, and as he goes by we hear a great squawking. The best of birds will bring twice as much as a turkey. The cocks' heads are tucked inside the baskets, so that they may not peck at one another.

About the Cathedral are scores of street peddlers who sell candies, peanuts, and fruit. It is remarkable how small are the purchases of many of the people. The peanuts are not measured out by the glass or the pint as with us, but are counted. One can get about ten for a cent. In one pile may be four or five candies and another may contain four oranges laid up like a pyramid.

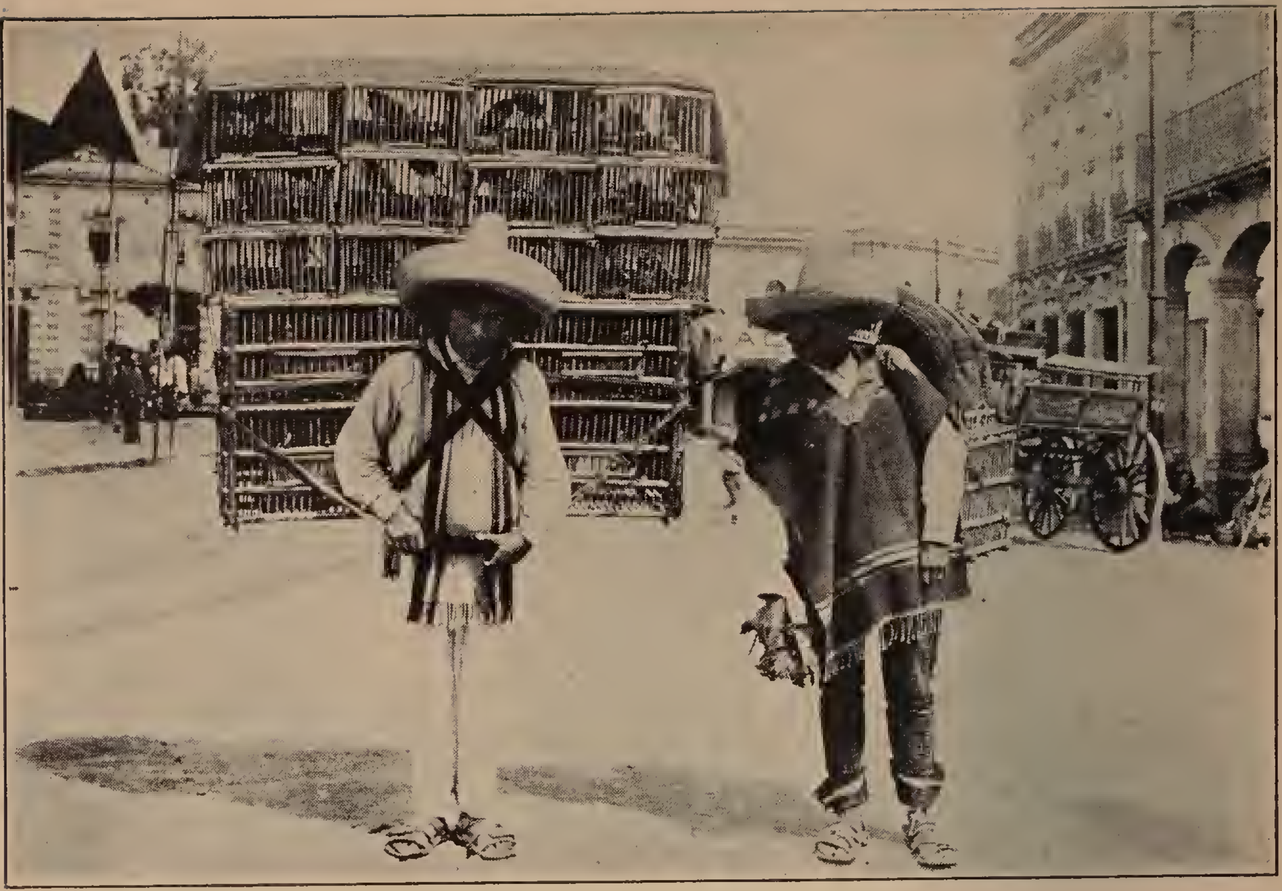
In the markets there are little piles of potatoes containing a dozen tubers not more than an inch in diameter. Such a pile may sell for a nickel. Onions and green peppers are counted, and squash and pumpkins are cut into pieces and sold by the slice. I saw women to-day buying them at one cent a slice. Think of a cent's worth of cabbage! But many of the people are poor, ten or fifteen cents must cover a whole morning's marketing, and a cent's worth of cabbage will flavour a stew. In the villages of the interior no market woman will sell her eggs except by the *mano,* or hand, which means five at one time. If you want to buy five dozen, you must let her count you out twelve *manos,* paying for each as it is handed to you.

Mexico has always been noted for its markets. Some of the largest and most elaborate buildings of to-day are devoted to them and every city considers its market house a sort of public institution. Many of the markets are hundreds of years old. I found one at Jalapa which looked as though it had been built by the Moors. It had many Doric columns upholding the portico surrounding the court where the Indian peddlers squatted and offered their wares. The market of the capital is largely of iron and is big enough to accommodate hucksters to the number of ten thousand or more. Toluca has a wonderful market, while that of Puebla is spread over six acres. Everything one can think of is sold in these places, and the mass of people depend upon them for their vegetables, meat, grain, and fruits.

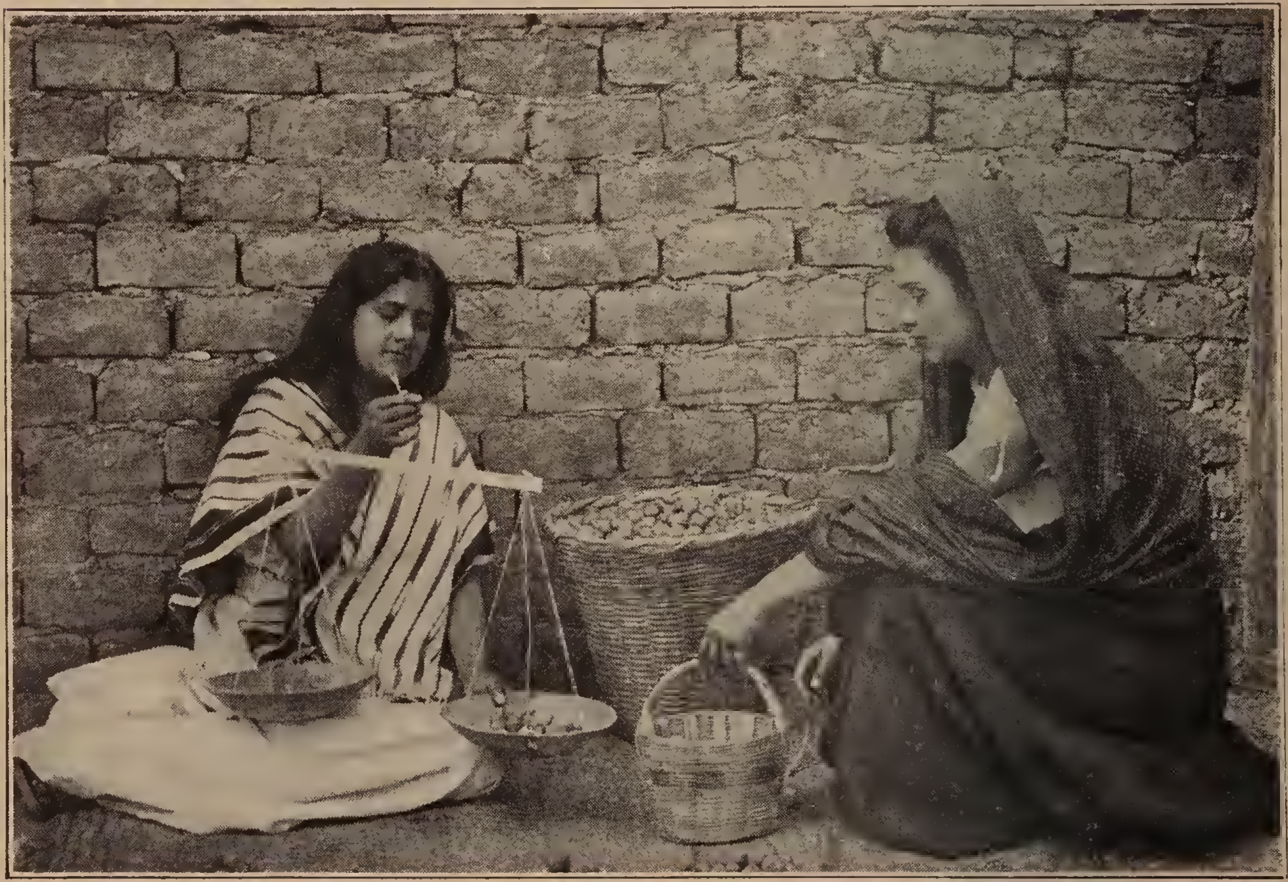
About every city market you will find booths devoted to fancy work, pottery, shoes, or cheap dry goods, and notions. Mexico has many house industries, and there are towns that make certain kinds of wares which are peddled about over the country or sold in small shops by the natives. Every town has its plaza around which are often arcades upheld by pillars. These arcades



The pulque gatherer sucks into a gourd the sap of the maguey cactus, and then transfers it to his pigskin bag, in which it is taken to the fermenting room.



Bird peddlers, whose stocks range from live turkeys to fighting cocks, are a feature of the street life of Mexico City. Parrots that talk, screeching parakeets, and tiny songsters from the jungle are also sold in the flower market.



The Mexican housekeeper purchases only one day's supplies at a time. Piles of a dozen potatoes may bring a nickel and squash and pumpkins are sold by the slice. One may even buy a cent's worth of cabbage.

are filled with petty merchants, each of whom has a cupboard and counter set against one of the pillars. The peddlers are of all ages and of both sexes and they sell all sorts of things. Here the wife of a shoemaker stands with her back against the wall with a half-dozen pairs of sharp-toed children's shoes on the flags at her feet. Next is a black-bearded man peddling bridle-bits and ornamental Mexican spurs, while hard by, perhaps, is a cane peddler who has carved sticks to catch the eye of the tourist. All of the villages have little stores run by Indians.

In Mexico City there are many street peddlers selling clothing, some hawking straw hats and baskets, and others with trays of toys, candy, and other sweetmeats. I saw one to-day who had a score of birdcages tied to his back. He was peddling canaries and parrots. Near him was a woman with an open umbrella filled with picture postcards, and farther on walked a porter loaded with dressed chickens tied by the legs in a bundle. He offered them to the passers-by at so much apiece.

And then there are men who carry kids over their shoulders and peddle them from house to house, and boys who go along with great screenlike frames of shoestrings tied to sticks. There are some peddling books and others with mirrors and notions for women. There are peddlers who drive live turkeys through the streets so that you can buy your Thanksgiving bird on the hoof and know it is fresh. The turkeys are often driven to market from miles out in the country and the men in charge will refuse to sell the whole flock on the way. You may perhaps get one or two birds but the flock must be kept as an excuse for his stay in the market, where he meets all his friends.

CHAPTER XXXI

TOLUCA IN THE HILLS

COMING from the capital to Toluca my train carried me past the great castle of Chapultepec, along the fashionable drive of the Paseo and out into the beautiful Valley of Mexico, one of the richest farming districts on the globe. As far as I could see, until the mountains cut off the view, were plains of black earth and green crops spotted with peons in white clothes. Here a herd of cattle was watched by an Indian girl who waved her hand at us as the cars flashed by. There were peons carrying all kinds of stuff on their backs to the market and a little farther on were automobiles streaming over the fine motor road between Toluca and Mexico City. Now the train cut its way through a vast plantation of maguey being cultivated to supply the *pulquerías* of the capital. Indians were gathering the juice from the plants and carrying it off in pigskins, some staggering, drunk with the beer they were bearing.

As we rode farther on over the country the City of Mexico receded. The hundred great domes which tower above the plain of flat-roofed houses dwindled, and off in the distance the snowcapped mountains and the great twin volcanoes of Mexico looked down upon us. The "White Woman" seemed to have put on a new shroud as she lay there on her cold bier under the blue sky, and in the strong sunlight the other mountains were dusted with silver.

Half an hour later the country grew rougher and the floor of the valley became rolling. We ascended low hills and shot out of the green into a range of brown mountains as wild as the wildest part of the Rockies. Great hills rose upward over the track, frowning threateningly down upon the engine as it defiantly steamed its way onward. Passing through deep gorges and along rocky defiles, the train dashed down into green valleys, taking us in a quarter of an hour from the scenery of the Nevada Rockies to that of the Alleghanies. The hills were now green, and the queer huts of the peons reminded me so much of the Tyrolese Alps, that when we stopped at the station, I half expected to see German faces under the great hats of the people.

The houses of this region were different from any I have seen elsewhere in Mexico. Many of them were not bigger than dog-kennels and some looked like old-fashioned chicken coops. They had ridged roofs tied down by ropes to the low walls; they seldom had windows, and the doors were so low that the people had to stoop to get into them. They were built right into the sides of the mountain. Now and then we passed villages of thatched huts with little plantations of maguey about them. The Indians here hold and work the land in common. The fields are separated from one another by rows of maguey plants, which form excellent fences. They make the whole land look like a crazy quilt of crops, with the patches joined by seams of green cactus.

Whenever the train halted, the chocolate-coloured crowd that gathered around us was Egyptian rather than Bavarian. Pretty Indian women in white waists and red skirts, and little girls clad only in blankets held out their hands just as do the children of the Nile when they clamour for *backsheesh*.

At Mexico City we were more than seven thousand feet above the sea. At Dos Ríos, seventeen miles farther on, we were thirteen feet higher. A little later we reached the great divide where two streams only fifty feet apart flow in opposite directions, one pouring into the Pacific Ocean and the other into the Gulf of Mexico. This point is nearly two miles above the level of the sea, and it was here that I first saw the snow-white volcano of Nevada de Toluca, which is fifteen thousand feet high.

We now entered the rich valley of Toluca with its vast haciendas covered with the splendid crops produced by the wonderful climate and irrigated soil. Here again the houses changed, the board roofs held down by stone and the thatches of cactus giving place to great white haciendas with tiled roofs. About them were patches of red and white, the kennel-like houses of the peons, each not more than six feet square. As we descended the mountain we skirted the village of Jajalpa where a score of pretty girls, bare-armed and bare-footed, brought *pulque* to the car windows to sell. A few minutes more and we were at Toluca.

Though in the last hour of our ride we had descended one thousand feet, at Toluca we were still that much higher than Mexico City. If the town could be moved into Europe or the United States, it would make fortunes for its people as a mountain resort, for it is situated more than eight thousand feet above the sea and is as clean as a pin. Streams of clear water flow through the streets, and the coloured walls of the houses with their dark red roofs look as though they had just received a coat of fresh paint.

Toluca seems newer than any city of Massachusetts, yet it was founded more than one hundred years before Boston sprang up on the cow paths, and it has been the capital of the state of Mexico for almost a century. Where the State House stands on the plaza was once the palace of a son of Cortes, and near it is the long, low market-house, its heavy roof upheld by many columns.

This market is famous for the Toluca baskets woven in green, red, blue, and white; they are sold by the thousand. The peddlers squatting in its arcades have also Indian lacquer work, rag dolls, and other toys. The Mexicans are fond of their children, and one of the chief industries of the country is making playthings.

In fact, Mexico might almost be called the land of the rag baby. Near the great Cathedral in Mexico City I saw a hundred men selling rag dolls that were of all colours and made up to represent all sorts of characters. There were black dolls and white dolls, and dolls dressed as Indian maidens. Here at Toluca I found a doll, as big as a two-year-old child, made out of rags. Puebla has dolls with papier-maché heads and bodies of rags, and I find everywhere dolls of burnt clay ranging in length from that of my little finger to that of a baby. Some of the dolls sold in Mexico City are of wax or clay on which cloth has been pasted. Some have mantillas of lace and others are in full Mexican costumes. Peddlers sell them about the hotels where the foreigners stay.

At Christmas time the streets of all the towns and cities are lined with stalls selling dolls, candy, mats, baskets, and pottery figures. Our Christmas trees are unknown to

Mexican children. Instead they have earthenware jars decorated with tinsel and streamers of bright tissue paper, called *piñates*. Sometimes the jars take the form of clowns, dancing girls, or animals.

On Christmas Eve, the *piñata*, stuffed with candy, games, and toys, is hung from the ceiling of a room or from a tree in the patio. The children are blindfolded and each is given three chances to strike the jar with a stick. At last the jar is broken and down comes a shower of sweetmeats and toys. The children tear the bandages from their eyes and shout and laugh as they scramble about for sweetmeats and gifts.

In Mexico the Christmas festivities usually begin on the 16th of December and end on the 25th. A great feature is the *posada*, from a word meaning an inn. The *posadas* are characteristic of Mexico and are held in commemoration of the time when Joseph and Mary found no abiding place in the inn and were forced to go to the stable in Bethlehem. For the nine-day celebration nine families often join forces, the whole company coming together in their respective homes on successive evenings. Each night they form a procession and walk about the house several times carrying lighted candles and chanting a litany. The leader bears wax or clay figures of Mary and Joseph which he holds up as he asks shelter for the Holy Family. This is refused every night until Christmas Eve. Then with an image of the Christ Child added to those of Mary and Joseph, the whole party finds refuge with the host best able to entertain the party and there all the nine families have a dance and a supper.

I saw a great many live babies in the market of Toluca. They were with their mothers who were selling dolls of rags and of clay. The Mexican babies are the brightest black-eyed specimens of humanity I have ever seen. Those of the poorer classes are wrapped up in shawls and carried around on the backs of their mothers or it may be of their little brothers. A bare-legged rascal of six who begged a dime from me at the station to-day had a baby on his back nearly as big as himself. He looked more like a Japanese urchin than a Mexican Indian, and it was worth ten cents to get a laugh out of him and his baby sister.

For a month after they are born, Mexican babies are kept in swaddling clothes. Then, whether boys or girls, they are put into pantalets. As they grow older their clothes become more like those of their mothers and fathers. A boy of four is often dressed just like the head of the family.

I remember two youngsters I photographed yesterday. Each had on a hat higher than mine. They were more dignified than American boys of sixteen, though they could not have been more than four years of age. Their sister had the long dark shawl of the Mexican woman about her, and her dress reached almost to her feet. She could not have been more then ten years of age but she was already approaching womanhood. Girls here mature at thirteen and at fourteen they can be legally married. The great mortality among Mexican infants is probably due in some degree to early marriages. The authorities state that half of all the children of Mexico die before they are seven years of age.

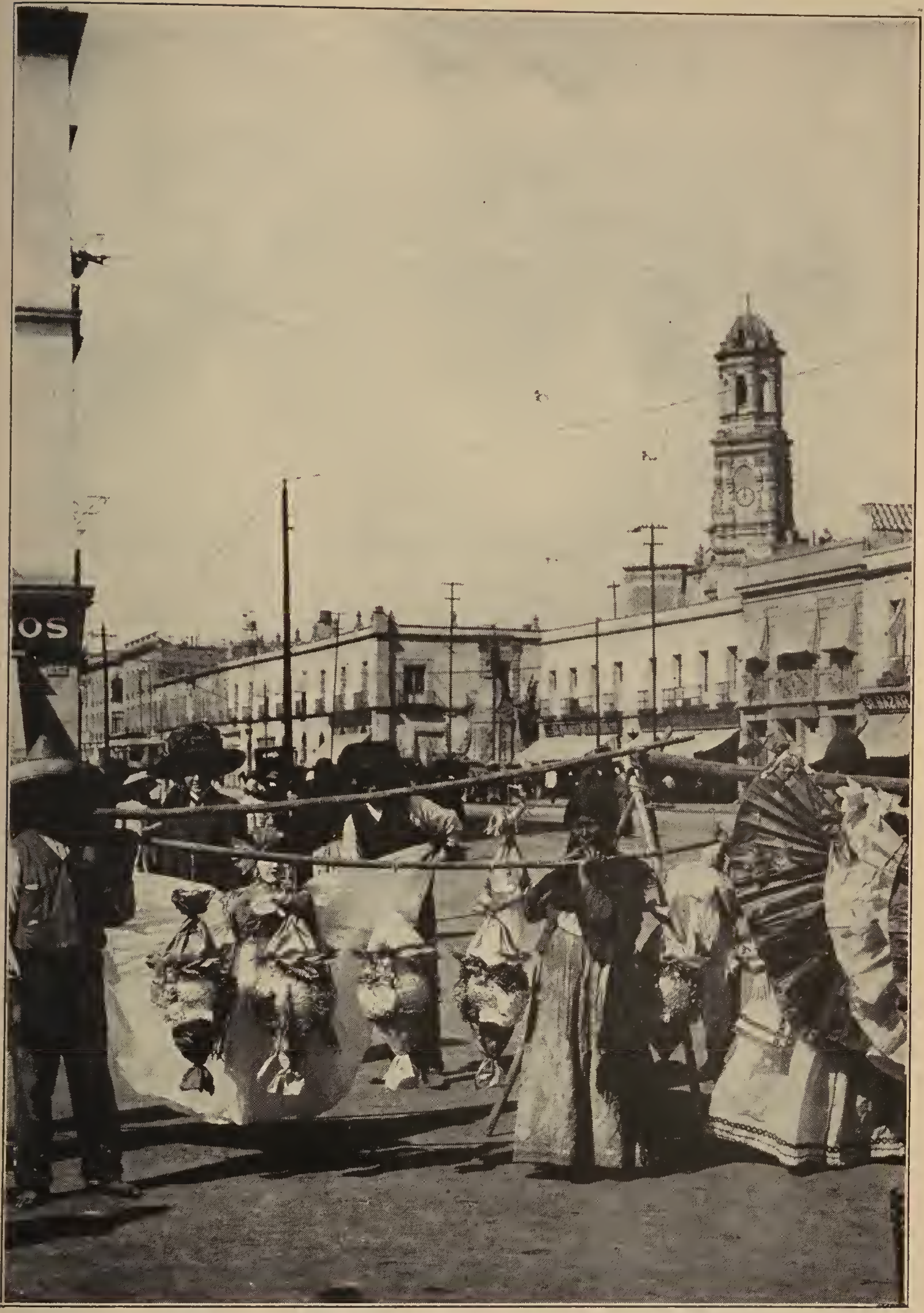
CHAPTER XXXII

SLICING UP THE BIG ESTATES

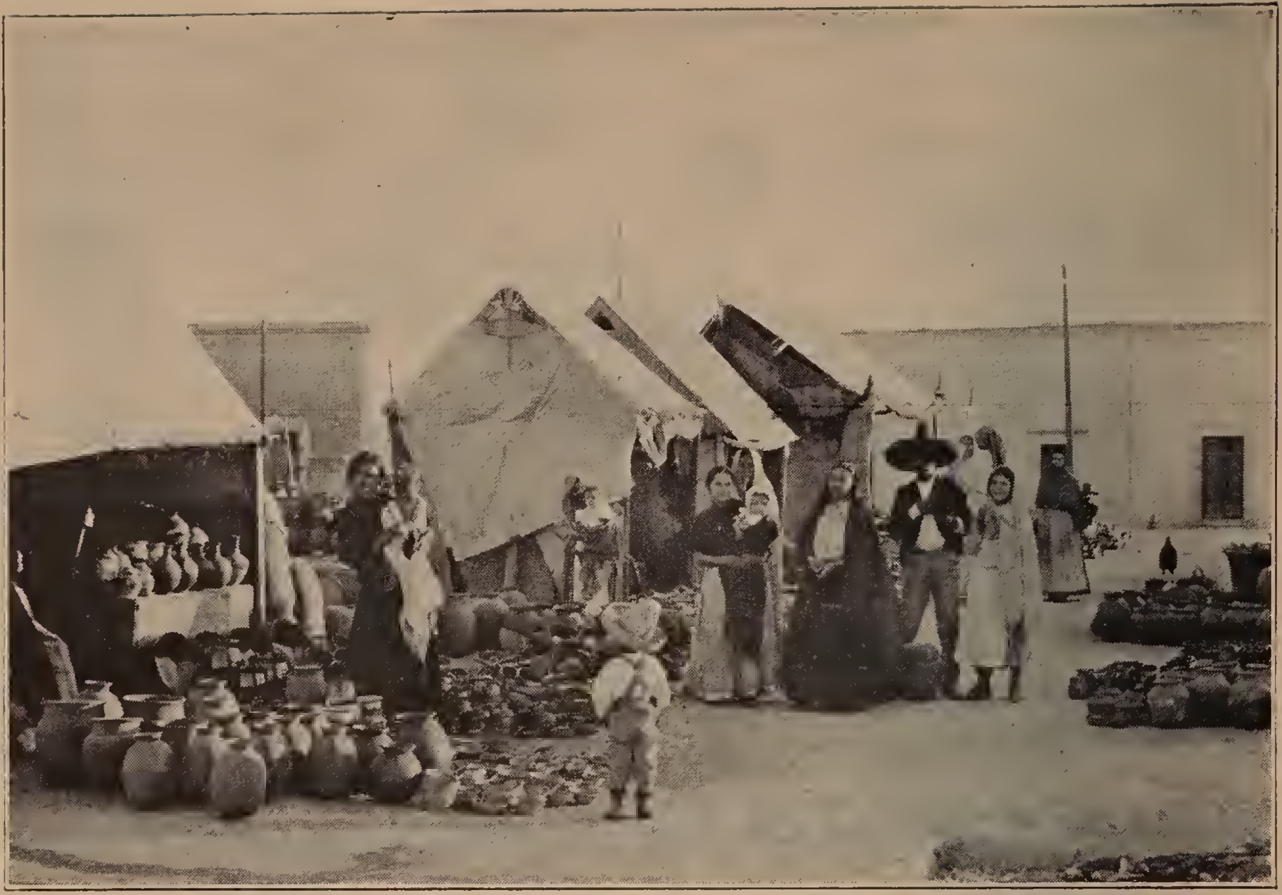
I AM delighted with San Luis Potosí. It is one of the live, up-to-date centres of northern Mexico and many Americans regard it as the best city of the country. For many years it has been known principally for the silver and gold mines in the surrounding mountains. It is also the capital of the state of San Luis Potosí. The legislature which meets here was one of the first to pass laws putting into effect the radical land reforms decreed by the Constitution of 1917.

The first city was built up in the hills of San Pedro, twelve miles from here, but that site was later abandoned for lack of adequate water supply. The present water works, which are owned by a private concern, have not kept pace with the growth of the city. Nevertheless, San Luis Potosí has paid much attention to sanitary matters, and, in contrast with some of the neighbouring cities, is remarkably clean.

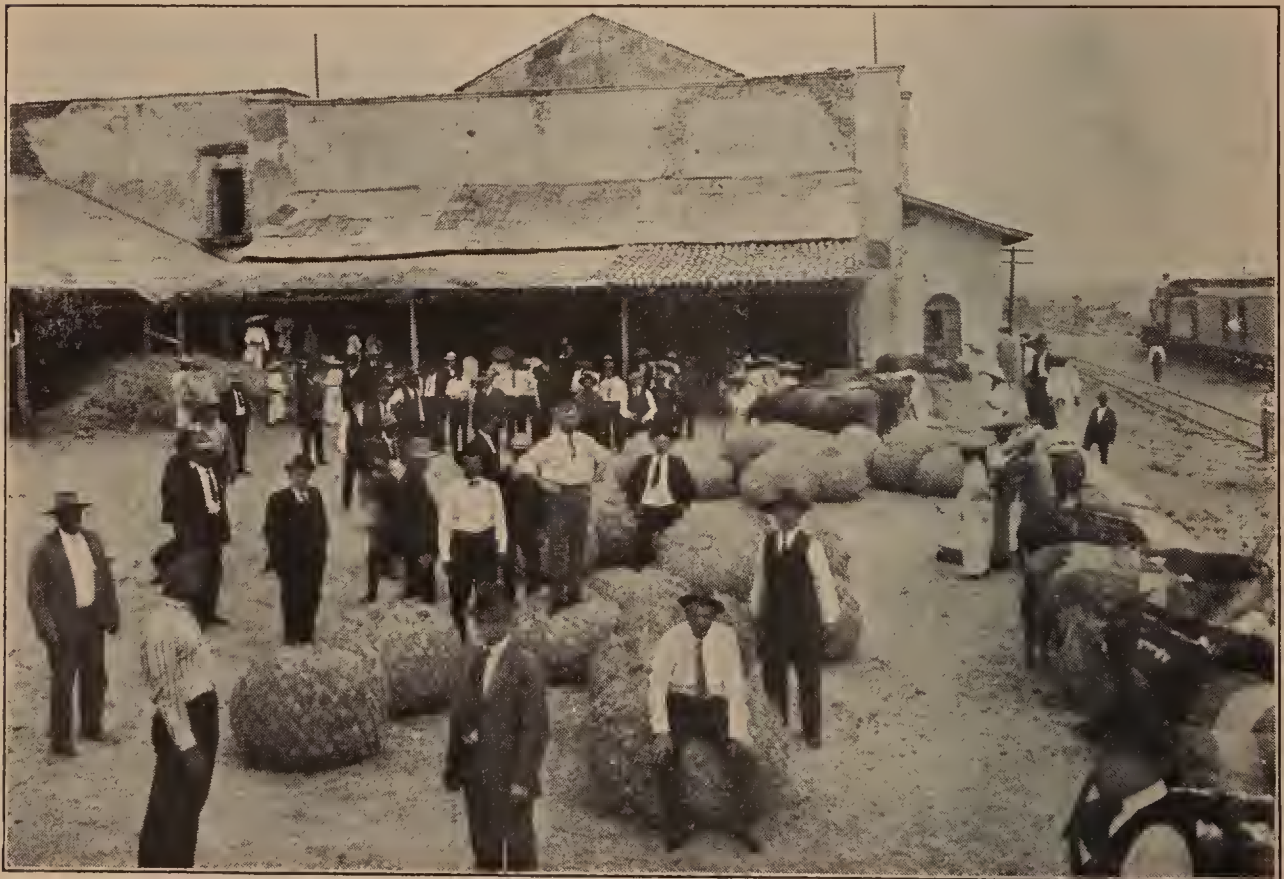
San Luis lies in a basin formed by the mountains. It is more than a mile above the sea, and its altitude and beautiful surroundings make it a favourite summer resort for people of the coast regions. It is on the main line of the Mexican National, which is crossed here by the railroad to Tampico nearly three hundred miles away. Besides the smelters serving the mines, it has a fruit cannery, woollen



Instead of Christmas trees the Mexicans use decorated pottery jars and figures called *pinates*. These are stuffed with presents, hung from the ceiling, and then shattered to bring down a shower of gifts.



"Every market has its babies, either crawling about underfoot or carried in their mothers' shawls. Smaller than our babies of the same age, they are the brightest little black-eyed specimens of humanity I have ever seen."



In the highlands, where wheat is grown, it is brought to the threshing mills in great fibre nets. The Mexicans eat less of this grain than we, corn being their staple food.

mills, and many small shops making rough shoes, overalls, and shirts for the peons.

The city is well built. It has a fine cathedral, a baker's dozen of gray churches, and stores with the best-looking show windows I have found anywhere outside the capital. The show window is a sign of progress in Mexican merchandising. In my first trip to Mexico I found hardly a store with a window exhibit, but now the merchants appreciate the advantage of displaying their goods. The business men here are among the most enterprising in the country and many of them have grown rich.

The population of San Luis is rapidly increasing. Indeed, I am surprised at the number and size of the Mexican cities. The capital is larger than Pittsburgh, Guadalajara has almost as many people as New Haven, and any one of half-a-dozen other cities would be a metropolis in Mississippi or Montana. But Mexico has always been a land of town dwellers. Even out in the country the Indians huddle together in villages and every large hacienda is a miniature city which may furnish shelter and employment for thousands.

It is at such enormous estates that the new land laws are directed. The big trust of Mexico has long been the land trust. For generations about one thousand families owned the bulk of the good lands and the land barons were the real power behind the government. One cause of the revolutions was the demand of the people for the control of the land, and it was the big estate owners, rather than the political leaders, who were overthrown in the struggle. Diaz foresaw the trouble and tried to bring about reform by taxing the big areas not under cultivation. But the cattle kings and their followers frustrated his plans and only after years of warfare are their estates being sliced up for the people.

About sixty-odd years ago every village had certain lands owned in common. Each householder had the use of a little plot, upon which he could raise enough corn for his family and pasture his cows. These blocks of land with the town in the centre were often in the heart of or adjoining big estates which were held under grants given by the kings of Spain centuries ago, and the estate owners wanted to add the town lands to their already large tracts. During the administration of President Juarez they succeeded in abolishing the communal system and in passing a law to divide up the communal lands in severalty among the people of the villages. The Indians were so simple that as soon as they got possession they sold out for practically nothing and thus the communal tracts came into the hands of the estate owners.

The peons now had neither communal holdings nor any land of their own, and so they became more than ever dependent upon the big *hacendados* and were compelled to work the estates upon any terms the owners might offer. It is this situation that the present rulers are trying to remedy.

Under the Constitution of 1917 and the new laws, a village may petition the agrarian commission for land, either as "restitution" of tracts it once owned, or as a "donation." If it cannot establish a just claim for "restitution," enough acreage may be "donated" to provide every head of a family with twelve and a half acres of irrigated land and if no irrigated land is available, fifteen acres of inferior land may be allotted instead. Lands so distributed are carved out of the surrounding large estates.

Already nearly half of the villages of Mexico have asked for such land division. Some of the petitions have been denied and some are still pending; but more than two million acres have been divided and about one thousand of the nearly nine thousand great haciendas have had slices taken from them.

The state of San Luis Potosí, which is of the same size as West Virginia, has good farming land as well as great areas that are more than half desert. In the western semi-arid regions of the state the *hacendado* may keep for himself a maximum of ten thousand acres, while in the well-watered eastern portion he must give up all but five thousand acres. The remainder of his hacienda may be divided into single-family farms and sold on instalments to persons equipped to work them. The *hacendados* are given a year to cut up their estates or let the government do it for them. The tax rates for large holdings have been increased so as to make it to the advantage of the owners to sell some of their lands.

The Mexican movement for dividing up the large estates is much like the land-reform programmes in eastern and central Europe, where some of the governments are trying to provide every poor man with a farm of his own. In no country do the big landowners like the new order, and in Mexico many have complained that they were being deprived of their property without adequate compensation. The government has paid for the tracts taken over for resale to the people with bonds supposed to be worth the assessed value of the lands, plus ten per cent. Some of the owners, especially foreigners, have refused to accept the bonds, because, they said, they would have no market value as securities until the government began to pay the six per cent. interest they are supposed to bear, and because they have been issued in such large amounts as to cause doubt as to their redemption.

The state of Chihuahua has a law limiting the maximum holdings to from twenty-five hundred to ten thousand acres, plus one hundred thousand acres of grazing land. Laws like these strike the death blow to such estates as those of the Terrazas family.

Don Luis Terrazas and his immediate relatives held outright nearly eight million acres of the best land of Chihuahua, and in crossing their farms from north to south one might ride on the train farther than from New York to Washington. From east to west the estate was wider than from Baltimore to New York and the boundaries were so poorly defined that no one knew just where their lands ended. It is said that Terrazas himself did not know how many acres he had. His wealth was reckoned at one hundred million dollars and he was the autocrat of the state.

This enormous area was kept in large tracts and most of it was used for stock raising only. It had great droves of horses and mules and large flocks of sheep and goats; sixty thousand calves were branded every year and it was said that Terrazas could lose a thousand beef cattle and not miss them.

Besides the land he held, Don Luis had acquired most of the public utilities of his part of Mexico. He loaned money at high rates of interest and controlled the banks. He lived like a lord and entertained royally on his great hacienda. He could take care of one hundred guests at a time, and his establishment had as many servants as the palace of a king. Some years ago he asked a high church

Ownership of wells and streams often complicates the division of land in the regions where water is scarce. The land laws permit larger holdings in the dry districts than in those of abundant rain.

It is claimed that because expensive irrigation and machinery are needed for development of its coffee, sisal, sugar, and other agricultural resources, Mexico can never be a country of small farmers.

dignitary to dedicate a new house of worship on one of his ranches. The holy father came with a great corps of guests and Don Luis kept them for more than three weeks, entertaining them with hunting parties and excursions of various kinds. During this time the guests rode only white horses which had been specially selected by the old *hacendado*.

When it came to deal with the Terrazas properties the Chihuahua state government proposed to let Americans buy a large part of them. But the federal government objected to the foreigners gaining control of such a large territory and is itself dividing the great estate. Its decree reads:

> Whereas Señor Don Luis Terrazas now possesses more land than any other person in the Republic, since his estates cover more than five million acres in the state of Chihuahua;
>
> Whereas a large part of this property is at present uncultivated and abandoned, and its owner is making no effort to make it productive;
>
> Whereas it is the policy of the federal government to procure by all legal means the subdivision of the estates which do not constitute a source of production
>
> Señor Terrazas's lands except those which he is himself cultivating, are expropriated at the valuation registered in the land-tax office, plus ten per cent.

Another question in Mexico is, what will the peon do with the lands thus restored? Will he let them lie idle for lack of ability and enterprise to work them, or will he sell his holdings to any one who wants to buy? Already, it is stated, cultivation has ceased on many large areas as a result of the land-reform laws and fear of their consequences. It is claimed also that, even if the peons were as capable as the best farmers of Kansas, Mexico could not be made a land of small farms. Much of the soil requires irrigation and expensive machinery and it is said that it can be worked profitably only when held in large tracts and by men having plenty of capital. There are some who deny that the peon even wants the responsibility of managing his own acres.

The farm labourer in Mexico takes no thought of the morrow:

> He is the same that his fathers have been,
> He sees the same sights his fathers have seen,
> He breathes the same air, he views the same sun,
> And does the same things that his fathers have done.

He wants money for bare necessities, for spending at the numerous fiestas, for drink and gambling, but seldom for comforts or savings. As an experiment, one of the American mine companies in Chihuahua put up sixty comfortable two-room houses, with windows, doors, and wooden floors. The Indian miners took possession. A year later they had sold doors, windows, locks, and hinges, and burnt up the floors by making fires on them.

Many maintain that the only way to keep a peon at work is to keep him in debt by advancing him wages or goods. This idea formed the basis of the complete and widespread peonage system. Nearly every big estate had its store where the Indian labourers could run bills, and the same was true of the factories and the mines. The peon is like a child. He is naturally thriftless, and will borrow all he can, especially for weddings and funerals. A man will mortgage his future in order to have a big wedding outfit, and every death in the family means more debt to pay for the funeral.

Peonage kept thousands of farm hands and their families in a state of debt slavery. They dared not leave a master as long as they owed him, and so they lived along from hand to mouth, receiving food and clothing and now and then a little extra money to spend. The only way they could escape was by getting someone to assume their debts and this often meant a new master.

The following story illustrates the old system:

Some Americans who were opening a rubber plantation in the tropical lowlands were hard up for labour. They offered big wages, but in vain. All the peons of the neighbourhood were indebted to the owners of the estates about and the promises of the foreigners fell flat.

At last the Americans brought in several bushels of new Mexican dollars, and laid them in a great pile on the table in the rude building which formed the plantation office. They then called in the peons and showed them the money, saying that it had been brought there to pay off their debts and that there were bushels of other dollars to pay wages as well. The wages proposed were higher than any the peons had ever had in the past. The sight of the money worked wonders. The peons came over in a body, bringing with them papers showing their exact indebtedness to their former employers. The Americans then went with them to their old employers and saw that they were legally freed. The men were now able to make contracts, which were registered with the district officials so that the labourers were bound to the American employers.

The rich estate owners practically controlled the *jefe-politico*, or local official, who could draft into the army any man refusing to work. During the administration of Diaz it was the same with factories, the *jefe-politico* aiding the managers in keeping the men on the job.

I heard the other night a story of how the ignorant

Indian was prevented from leaving an employer. One of the peons who thought he would keep track of his indebtedness had marked down his advances item by item in a book. He took this book to his master and asked him how it was that the foreman had charged him fifteen dollars, when he had received only five. The master called in the foreman, who swore at the peon, saying:

"You ignorant fellow, can't you see you owe fifteen dollars? First there was the five dollars you asked me for; second, the five dollars I gave you; and third, the five dollars that was charged to your account. Now three times five is fifteen. You owe fifteen dollars and you must get out of here and go back to your work."

This is probably an overdrawn statement, but any fraud could be easily perpetrated upon the unsuspecting peon by an unscrupulous master.

The peon himself often frustrated the efforts of his employers to make him a free man. Some years ago an American bought a hacienda along with which went four hundred peons and their accounts, amounting to some six thousand dollars. He paid the accounts and then called the workmen together and told them that in order to make the right start he had wiped out all their debts to him and would pay regular cash wages. Much to his surprise, the peons did not report for work for several days afterward, and he found they were preparing to leave. Upon further inquiry he learned that the idea of working for a *hacendado* to whom they did not owe money made them feel that they could not be sure of keeping their places. Not until the owner had told them that he had changed his mind and their accounts were still binding did they become pacified and go back to work.

Many Mexicans think the peon will not be able to manage the land restored to him under the reform laws, for, like his forefathers, he takes no thought for the morrow and leads a hand-to-mouth existence.

Of all the caves in Mexico the finest is at Cacahuamilpa. On its walls the Empress Carlotta wrote, "Maria Carlotta reached this point." Twelve years later a Mexican president, who hated kings, wrote beneath, "Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada went beyond."

Another American ranch owner helped one of his men to reduce his debt from five hundred to three hundred and fifty pesos. Thereupon the man tried to get his indebtedness back to the old figure, because he was proud of being permitted to owe such a big sum.

The revolutions have wiped out the debts that held the workers in their places, and under the new constitution and labour laws debt slavery has been made illegal. Yet, I am told, many peons are afraid to take advantage of the rights now guaranteed them. They still want a master to lean on, and prefer to continue in the same way to which they have so long been accustomed.

CHAPTER XXXIII

DOWN THE MOUNTAINS ON A BOX CAR

DOWN the mountains on top of a box car at fifty miles an hour!

A mad descent through some of the wildest gorges on the American continent!

From the temperate to the torrid zone in a single leap!

Shooting out of the cold and barren Mexican highlands into the tropical luxuriance of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico!

These are some of the features of the ride I took yesterday over the railroad from San Luis Potosí to Tampico. Starting from Aguascalientes, on the main line from El Paso to Mexico City, it runs to San Luis and thence across the high plateau and down to the lowlands on the Gulf Coast. The cars cling to the sides of the mountain cliffs, steam their way through plains of the richest soil, and as they make the descent from a mile up in the air to sea level, command panoramic views of some of the most magnificent scenery of this picturesque land.

But let me give you the story of my ride. The first part of it was taken in a sleeper, traversing the plateau during the night. When I went to the station at San Luis Potosí it was moonlight, and the pure air and bright sky made such a picture as one can see only in Mexico or Spain. The light of the great yellow moon softened the lines of the old Moorish buildings and turned into ghostly brigands the natives moving about. The stars seemed closer to the earth. I felt that I was in the land of the Orient, and was tempted to look for the Southern Cross, when a grinning American porter, with white teeth shining out of his coal-black face, came to tell me that my train was ready. He opened the car, and a few minutes later we were riding out over great fields of cactuses, through plantations of maguey plants, and by little villages which lay like white cities of the dead under the rays of the moon. It was amid such surroundings that I went to sleep.

Awaking I found myself in a nest of the mountains, and on the edge of one of the most picturesque of Mexican towns. This was Cardenas, where we took breakfast. Except for the station and the sheet-iron railroad shops we found the town made up almost entirely of huts with thatched roofs. And such huts and such thatch! The rough leaves of palm trees had been interwoven with grass and tied to poles, making mats which had been placed over the buildings of sun-dried bricks. The huts were of all sizes. Some were bigger than dog-kennels, and others could have been crowded into the hall bedroom of a city house without touching the walls. There were no windows and the doors looked as though they had been chopped out with a hatchet. In front and peering out of the doors were men, women, and children, any one of whom would draw a crowd if seen on Broadway. There were Indians and *mestizos*, the women half dressed and some of the babies not dressed at all; the men barefooted and in blankets and hats. All devoured us with their great eyes as we sat in the little station and drank black coffee and ate the heavy hot biscuits which with young chicken made up our breakfast.

Leaving Cardenas the railroad climbed on into the mountains. We passed over plains with crops growing in the richest luxuriance. Here and there were haciendas, and beyond a great plain out of which rose in solemn grandeur sugar-loaf hills with plateaus on their tops. Now and then we went through fine farming districts where the land was well tilled, and as we ascended the mountains, I saw the hills of blue-grass, patched with black fields and crossed with roads of dark brown. Here our surroundings were those of the Alleghanies in Pennsylvania, and at times it seemed as though we were in the foothills of the Swiss Alps.

At the beginning of the Tomasopo Canyon I crawled with the trainmaster, a Mexican wearing a big pistol in a holster attached to his belt, to the top of a box car and began my wild ride down the mountain. The road here runs about a great amphitheatre, with walls of green hills rising from a green plain in the centre. The track skirts the plain in an almost perfect circle, making a curve more wonderful than that of the famous Horseshoe Bend. At one end of the amphitheatre a cascade of silver waters tumbles into the canyon. Great mountains rise above the road, and in some places their walls are precipitous and cliffs overhang the train. Sometimes I could look down for thousands of feet, sometimes we tore through rocky gorges so narrow that nothing but a strip of sky could be seen overhead. Here the huts were clinging to slopes so steep that it would seem that the peasants must have to plant their corn with shotguns, and there was a tunnel where, as our train plunged in, I had to flatten myself out on the top of the car to keep from being crushed or knocked off. Now we crossed rushing streams scolding their way over rocks one thousand feet below us and we looked with wonder at the vegetation and the trees lining the banks. Some of the ferns were as big as those of the Himalayas; and the trees of calla lilies and orchids were like none I have seen in any other part of the world.

In the Tomasopo Canyon the railroad winds about so that we travelled thirty miles to cover a distance which, as the crow flies, is only fifteen. The steepest grades are four and one half per cent. and we descended forty-five feet in every thousand. At places the railroad seems to be tacked to the cliff, and I do not wonder that some parts of its construction cost more than a half million dollars a mile.

As we neared the end of the canyon it widened. We could see the road climbing the hill above, and the valley below with the Tomasopo River breaking its way over wonderful waterfalls. At one point there are twelve falls, and the river tumbles down three hundred feet in a series of cascades. Here the sides of the canyon are walled with green. This makes the water look like a mixture of emeralds and diamonds as it leaps from one level to another.

The sudden change of climate was startling. When I climbed to the top of the car my overcoat was comfortable, but I took off my coat and vest before I got to the bottom of the canyon, and at the last of the trip I felt like shedding my skin and sitting in my flesh and bones. The flowers changed with the climate. As we slid down into the valley we saw coffee trees growing wild and palm trees, banana plants, and even bamboos. In the trees were thousands of parrots and blue paroquets and I was told that this whole region is filled with monkeys and game. Royal pheasants and wild turkeys abound and also the *chacalaca*, which has a call that sounds like its name. There are wild ducks, white-tailed deer, and not a few jaguars.

Just before leaving the mountains, we stopped at a village which was a fair type of the mountain hamlets. The telegraph station was in a car by the roadside, and back of it were the dozen huts that made up the town. There were no streets and no stores. The huts measured about ten by twelve feet and were made of wooden poles stuck in the ground with other poles on top tied together to make the roofs. The doors were just four feet in height and so narrow that only one person could crawl in at a time. I climbed down from my box car and looked into one. Its single room had neither chairs nor tables; the family squatted on the floor and slept on the ground. A half-dozen clay pots and kettles made up the utensils for cooking, all of which is done out-of-doors. The women were quite pretty. One of them was frightened nearly out of her wits when I photographed her.

We took dinner at Rascón, another village of huts. About the town is a carpet of ferns, and green coffee plants grow among the trees of the neighbourhood. The hillsides are clothed with thickets of palm and bamboo, and orchids of a hundred different varieties hang from the branches.

Rascón lies in a range of low hills, which, as we proceeded, grew into mountains. Soon the train dashed through another canyon and we wound along the walls of cliffs overhanging a broad valley which as far as the eye could reach seemed nothing but jungle. All of this valley used to belong to one man. It is now the property of a sugar company.

As we went on toward the coast we again climbed the mountains, our train hugging their sides, and below us was another vast plain filled with jungle where bushy cacti pushed their tall heads above the rest of the green. There was no sign of animal life. The land seemed good, but there were no houses or towns.

One of the most remarkable scenic wonders along the Tampico railroad is the Choy Cave near which our train obligingly stopped. To get an idea of it you must imagine a rocky mountain wall rising a thousand feet above the railroad tracks, with the floor of the valley lying two hundred feet below. Looking out of the car window you see a river of green water rushing out of an opening in the side of the mountain, and climbing down, find that the cave can be entered where the stream pours itself out. The inside of the cave resembles a vast cathedral with two great chambers connected by an almost perfect arch. Within the cave there is a pool of water which is more than sixty feet deep. There are a number of caves in this mountain and others near by, which have not been explored. A little back of Choy Cave is a huge underground chamber with a domed roof, lighted by a hole in the top. It is seven hundred feet from this opening to the floor. The walls of the cavern are white. Another cave has an entrance so low that one has to stoop to get in, and a chamber so large that a thousand men could stand upright within it.

Leaving the Choy Cave, we passed through miles of jungle and forest unbroken except for the narrow groove carved out by the railroad. Here is some of the finest timber in Mexico. I saw ebony, rosewood, and mahogany trees, which would bring good prices if cut and shipped to the markets. At present little lumbering is done, as the high wages paid by the oil companies make it all but impossible to get men to work in the forests.

We were then on the edge of the petroleum kingdom, where tens of thousands of subjects are engaged in the service of the black monarch of our era of oil. After traversing thirty miles of dense growth, without a single open field or pasture, our train burst into a clearing, in the midst of which rises a conical hill. It is topped by brick buildings and about it are wooden dwellings and black iron tanks. This is Ebano, where, on May 14, 1901, the first big oil well in Mexico came in with a rush that blew the drilling tools into the air. The preceding year a party of American capitalists and geologists had examined numerous pools formed by petroleum seeping out of the earth in this neighbourhood and had found at Ebano a spring bubbling with oil. Convinced that they were in the heart of one of the great oil fields of the future, they bought up land and laid out the works that have since taken the place of the jungle. For lack of a better market the first crude petroleum produced here was used in paving the streets of Mexico City. Later the Mexican railroads made over their coal-burning locomotives so as to use the new fuel. As the demand grew more wells were brought in, until now Ebano has tanks and reservoirs with a total storage capacity of more than a half-million barrels.

Oil seepages like that which led to the opening of the Tampico fields had been known for centuries. Many of the exudes were of such enormous size that they were death-traps for both animals and men. In them have been found bones of reptiles, beasts, and human beings, some of which, geologists say, belonged to creatures that lived be-

From the mountain plateau down through Tomasopo Canyon is a descent of more than a mile, a swift journey from the temperate zone to the tropics, with wonderful scenery all the way.

The homes of the natives give no sign that they are living on the edge of the Tampico oil fields, which have poured forth streams of liquid gold such as the world has never known before.

Pools of oil that have seeped out of the earth are invaluable guides to prospectors, but death-traps to men and beasts. The Aztecs used to burn *chapopote* as the sticky mass is called, on the altars of their gods.

fore William the Conqueror landed in England. The Indians surrounded the pools with fences of thorny bushes to keep their livestock from falling into the sticky mass, which they called *chapopote*. They coated the roofs of their huts with the crude petroleum, just as the oil companies to-day use it as paint to protect their storage tanks from the weather. It is said that the Aztecs burned *chapopote* on their pagan altars.

The tanks in which oil is stored at Ebano are far more conspicuous than the wells. They are of steel and are made in the States. The standard size is ninety-five feet in diameter and thirty feet high, and has a capacity of fifty-five thousand barrels of oil. Each tank is surrounded with an earthen embankment, thrown up to keep in the oil in case of a leak or a fire. All one can see of a flowing oil well after it has been successfully brought in and put under control is a block of concrete with a large iron pipe coming out of it and running down into the ground, and connected with the tanks and reservoirs where the oil is stored. As the oil flows from the wells its temperature is about 120° F. If it grows cool it will thicken and will not flow easily. For this reason the pipe lines are laid underground.

Leaving Ebano, the railroad track again enters the jungle and after ten miles or so reaches the Pánuco River, which it parallels to Tampico. The Pánuco is the water highway of the oil business of Mexico and the busiest river of the Republic. Its banks are lined with refineries and oil-loading stations, where barges and ocean-going tank ships of twelve thousand tons lie at the docks and take on their cargoes. At some of the stations the process of loading has been so speeded up that a tanker can leave port on the same day she enters. The Huasteca station set a world's record when it loaded a hundred-thousand-barrel tank ship in eight hours.

Much of the oil is shipped out by train, and the tracks along the river above Tampico are lined with pipes for filling tank cars. Whole trains of these cars are filled at one time and then hauled all over Mexico to keep the railways supplied.

CHAPTER XXXIV

TAMPICO AND THE OIL FIELDS

TAMPICO is the world's greatest oil port. It often ships nine million barrels of oil in a month. In the amount of tonnage entering and leaving its harbour it is the second port on the Atlantic coast of North America. For miles from the shore the surface of the Gulf is often covered with a scum of oil which incoming tankers have blown out along with their water ballast, and the sweet, sickish smell of petroleum fills the air of the whole region. Ships from all parts of the globe come in riding light and high and go out loaded to the water line with Mexican oil.

The city lies about seven miles back from the coast on the north bank of the Pánuco River, up which big tankers can go for a distance of about fifteen miles. Constant dredging is necessary to clear the channel of the silt brought down by the stream and the oil companies complain that this costs them about three hundred thousand dollars a year. The Mexican government imposes a harbour tax of ten cents a ton on all shipping, the proceeds of which are supposed to be spent in dredging the channel. The customs wharf and the jetties and other harbour improvements, designed and built by foreign engineers, have cost millions. The river gives sufficient harbourage for scores of vessels, and five or six big ocean steamers can lie alongside the customs wharf at one time.

Twenty years ago Tampico was a miserable little town where filth, poverty, and pestilence prevailed. Yellow fever stalked through the rough stone streets in the middle of which ran open sewers. To-day the city has a hundred thousand people and is clean, well-lighted, and up-to-date.

Tampico is the natural port for a large territory of wonderful agricultural possibilities as well as for the mining industry of northeastern Mexico. Some day, perhaps, when the oil wells no longer flow liquid gold and the agricultural and mining resources are more largely developed, it may be known as a general commercial city. But just now it is the oil developments that make it the livest town in the Republic.

To-day Tampico is the most American city in Mexico and the Mexicans themselves call it "Gringolandia." Side by side with old Spanish houses are seven- and eight-story office buildings of steel, brick, and concrete. The Imperial, the best hotel, is built in the American style, and is under American management. The railways to Monterey and San Luis Potosí were constructed with capital from the States, and an American steamer will take me from Tampico to New York. All of the oil wells were brought in by American drillers and all are equipped with American machinery. The Americans have even been able to inject into the Mexicans here some of the push and energy of Uncle Sam's nephews.

But, although our people have had the largest part in opening up this, the most remarkable oil reservoir ever discovered, other foreigners have shared in its development. The corporations now working are chiefly American and British, although smaller Italian, French, German,

To Americans, one of the attractions of life in the oil fields is the fine fishing in the Panuco River, where tarpon, the "silver king" of the game fish, is plentiful. The Tampico district offers good hunting also.

Sometimes when a big well comes in the pressure blows the drilling tools up against a steel block in the derrick striking a spark that ignites the oil and making a great blaze which it may take weeks to extinguish.

Scandinavian, Spanish, and Mexican companies are in active operation. Complete refineries for making commercial products from crude oil have been constructed in Tampico by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, the American Pierce Oil Corporation, and the British Royal Dutch Shell. The latter has two plants with a total daily capacity of more than 125,000 barrels of crude oil.

The light oil fields extend for hundreds of miles along the Mexican Gulf. The profitable wells are scattered from about sixty miles south of Tampico to Túxpam; and oil in paying quantities has been found farther south on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The exact width of the territory is not defined but the region in which the prospecting is going on is about as large as the state of Illinois. They are now taking oil out thirty miles back from the sea. The best wells have a depth of from sixteen hundred to twenty-four hundred feet.

The famous gusher, Potrero del Llano No. 4, was bored in 1910, and when the oil was struck it burst forth in a great stream which rose to the height of four hundred feet and continued to flow for more than three months before it could be controlled. During that time the petroleum was pouring out at the rate of five thousand barrels an hour. It covered the whole country, filling the rivers and lakes and contaminating the creeks. The oil spread over the grazing and drinking places of the cattle and caused the death of thousands. Vast quantities of oil flowed out to the sea and the Mexican Gulf had a coating of petroleum for three hundred miles along that part of its coast.

In their efforts to stop this enormous waste, the Pearson syndicate dug a reservoir covering several acres and ran the petroleum into it. This reservoir had a capacity of more than three million barrels, and it took just twenty-eight days to fill it. The great danger was fire, against which every precaution was taken. Guards were on duty both day and night. All vegetation was cut back to a distance of three hundred feet. Arc-lamps were kept burning at night to aid in the watch. After a flow of three months, the engineers succeeded in putting on the caps and the great gusher was finally brought under control. The well was then connected with a pipe line which carried the oil off to the tanks and the coast.

Another enormous gusher was the Dos Bocas, near the mouth of the San Geronimo River, sixty-seven miles south of Tampico. This was struck at a depth of eighteen hundred feet. It was on the Fourth of July, 1908, and provided the greatest Independence Day fireworks ever seen. The oil, which rushed forth at the rate of about four thousand barrels an hour, caught fire from the boiler of one of the engines, and the immense column of smoke and flame rose, it is said, to a height of two thousand feet. The blaze measured from forty to seventy-five feet in width. The fire kept going for more than two months, and it has been estimated that something like one hundred thousand barrels of oil was daily consumed before it was put out. At night the blazing torch could be seen more than two hundred miles away on the Mexican Gulf. It illuminated the whole country, and at midnight newspapers could be easily read seventeen miles away.

Huge sums were spent in efforts to shut off this Dos Bocas well. The owners tried in every way to extinguish the flames, but it was only when the salt water of some subterranean channel broke through that they were checked. The salt water mixed with the oil and ruined the well. To-day there is a steady stream of hot salt and sulphur water flowing from the Dos Bocas crater into the ocean.

Other famous producers were Casiano No. 7 and Cerro Azul No. 4, of the Mexican Petroleum Corporation. The former yielded more than seventy-five million barrels of oil before the salt water flowed in, and the latter has exceeded that enormous production.

These are not fairy stories. The Potrero del Llano No. 4 was drilled under the supervision of the late C. W. Hayes, once an engineer of the United States Geological Survey. Two days before oil was struck, Dr. Hayes had left the discouraged drillers for a trip into the country. As he rode off on his mule, he told them that they would probably reach oil within twelve feet. He was only fifty miles away, and the drill had gone down seven feet, when the oil and gas threw the tools high into the air and the well began to flow at a ten-thousand-barrel rate. It steadily increased. Within twenty-four hours the flow was twenty thousand barrels. The next day it was thirty thousand, and the gain continued until the daily output reached one hundred and sixty thousand barrels. The well had a pressure of more than eight hundred pounds to the square inch, and the oil flowed through eight-inch pipes to the tanks.

This oil well is said to be the largest of history. The Lucas gusher, at Spindletop, Texas, flowed seventy-five thousand barrels a day for a day or two, and the production of some of the Russian wells is reported at slightly more than one hundred thousand barrels daily, but none, except possibly Cerro Azul No. 4, has approached the yield of No. 4 of Potrero del Llano.

This is the first big oil well that has ever been found in limestone. All the great wells of Russia and California have been in sand formations, involving cave-ins and other handicaps before they could be controlled and their flow could be cared for.

Oil wells like these are apparently veritable streams of gold. This is so where the owners can control sufficient acreage around their wells, but where the ownership is held in small parcels, competing companies may be able to tap the same pool. In such cases it is necessary to work rapidly; this leads to feverish haste, with disregard of expense. It leads also to over-production, which means lower prices. It costs anywhere from fifty to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to drill a well, and by no means is every well a producer. The oil field south of Tampico has made many millions of dollars for some and lost millions for others.

The oil from the wells is pumped through pipe lines to Tampico, to Túxpam, and to the various sea loading terminals. There are huge steel tanks in the fields, at the pump stations, and at the sea coast. The largest of the tanks holds nearly ninety thousand barrels, and altogether their combined capacity is well over thirty million barrels.

At Tampico the tank ships are filled at docks, but on the coast the oil flows in through pipes laid on the sea bottom as far as two miles out from the beach. Fitted to the end of such a pipe is a flexible hose which is joined to the pipes of the tanker and the oil is then pumped in from the tanks on the shore.

The crude oil of Tampico yields a high percentage of gasoline and it is well adapted for refining. A large part

Displaying samples of his art, the itinerant photographer in Mexico sows the seed of social ambition, flattering his victims as persuasively as does his northern cousin at Coney Island.

When this well came in it blew the drilling derrick sky high. Finally it was brought under control and it now flows its hundreds of barrels of oil through pipelines connecting it with a big tank at tidewater.

Ninety tons of copper a day can be produced in the smelters of the Cananea Consolidated Copper Company, an American corporation. At times its payroll in Mexico is more than $500,000 a month.

The labour problem pursues the American investor across the border. Wages are lower in Mexico than with us, but so is efficiency; on some jobs it takes three Mexicans to do the work of one American.

of it goes to the oil refineries on our Atlantic coast, and at peak production more than five hundred thousand barrels per day have been shipped.

Adjacent to Tampico is another great oil field, the Pánuco-Topila. This is located along the Pánuco River about thirty miles west of the city. It yields a much heavier oil, which can be economically used for fuel just as it comes from the well. The operations here have been less spectacular and on a smaller scale than in the southern field, but they promise to have a much longer life. In the early days, before fuel oil was in general use, the development of this region was slow on account of low prices. With the increased use of oil as fuel, the price has advanced and the yield from this field is now more than two hundred thousand barrels per day.

The transportation of the oil from the wells to Tampico is accomplished both by pumping and by barges on the Pánuco. There are about fifteen sternwheelers engaged in this trade.

Fuel oil has become of such immense importance to every nation in the world and the production is so likely to run short, that Mexico's supply has become a tremendous asset. Both British and American interests are keen to control more and more of the world's supply, and Mexico realizes that she should derive as much revenue as possible for herself from this situation. The government has laid heavy taxes on the industry and the oil receipts of to-day are greater than were the revenues from all sources in the days of Porfirio Diaz. In the Constitution of 1917, Mexico declared that the oil deposits were the property of the nation and rigidly limited their exploitation by foreigners.

CHAPTER XXXV

OUR BILLION-DOLLAR INVESTMENT IN MEXICO

IF YOU will look at the map, you will see that Mexico has the form of a horn of plenty tilted upward, with its tip at Yucatan and its great, gaping mouth spreading across our entire southern border. Into this horn the United States has been pouring a stream of dollars, like so many golden grains of wheat falling into a sack. This has been going on for a generation, until now our investments in Mexico exceed one billion dollars, so much that if each dollar earned but five cents a year, the return would be more than enough to give an annual income of one hundred dollars to every citizen of Cincinnati or Buffalo.

The Mexico of to-day with its mines, railroads, oil wells, factories, and farms has been built up on borrowed money. Most of the money came not from her own people but from the United States, Great Britain, and a half-dozen countries of Europe. The foreign investors now own much more than the Mexicans do, and more than one third of the wealth of the nation is in the hands of Americans. This does not take into account the vast sums in mortgages and claims for damages.

I have before me a balance sheet of the Republic, showing what portions of her wealth are owned by the various nationalities. The figures come from every available source, including the Mexican federal and state governments, reports of our own consular officers, and statements from bankers and managers having to do with the financing and operation of properties in Mexico. According to these estimates, Americans own more in Mexico than any other nationality; the British come next, and then the French, Germans, Spanish, Dutch, Belgians, and Swiss, in the order named. The share of the Mexicans is less than one third of the whole.

The high tide of foreign investment was reached in the last days of Diaz, just before the ten years of revolution began. American millions were pouring into the country. Then came the revolutions, and, as the upheaval continued, the country was thrown into a turmoil and the unsettled conditions grew steadily worse. The balance sheets of the foreign corporations were strewn with figures in red ink, representing losses, and capital was frightened away. During this period the oil companies in the Tampico district were about the only foreign interests to increase their holdings and extend their operations. Even after Mexico quieted down, capital remained distrustful and the resumption of our peaceful invasion came very slowly. With the exception of the financing of a few mining and water-power projects in the northern and western parts of the country, the new money so far invested had been largely to preserve the existing properties. Meantime, huge claims for damages to life and property had piled up and the international bankers had to be called in to work out a plan by which Mexico might pay what she owes to the rest of the world.

Let me make a comparison showing the effect of the ten years of civil war and disorder upon the development of Mexico. Suppose you had a contract for working another man's farm, you to furnish everything, even to the household equipment. Suppose that after you have put in your money and are hard at work on the job, the owner and his family should quarrel and start to tear the whole farm to pieces, destroying the expensive tools and furniture you have provided and driving off your workmen and even shooting them down. Would you not feel like calling in the police to stop the fighting or at least to protect your property from danger? Would you not demand from the head of the family a guarantee that in future your rights should be respected? That was the condition of Mexico during the revolution. It explains the attitude of the American and other foreign investors to-day.

Porfirio Diaz, the dictator president, was the man who opened up Mexico to foreign capital. He saw that the country was hundreds of years behind the times and that it was not developing. He invited in outsiders with money and brains and gave them a free hand in making things go. By this means railways, waterworks, power plants, street cars, and public improvements of all kinds were obtained. The vast resources of the Republic began to be exploited and the Mexicans got profits and wages through the working of the foreign investments. Diaz had some capable men to aid him and under their direction all went smoothly and great fortunes were made.

Mexico has always lacked the capital and the technical knowledge necessary to develop her resources. These things must come from outside, and most of her great enterprises must be financed by foreigners. The revolutions which transferred the political power from the few to the many have developed new policies which do not attract foreign investors. The day has passed when great fortunes can be had for the asking, but the country has wonderful possibilities and there is plenty of room for sound conservative investment which should pay very good dividends. With fair treatment of persons and property, the American holdings will steadily increase and our interests in the country will continue to grow.

It is interesting to know how our investments in Mexico compare with those of the other nations. The country has about sixteen thousand miles of railways. In these the Mexican government owns most of the common stock but British and American capitalists own the preferred stock and bonds.

Taking the item of mines, the Mexicans own much less than we do. Their mine investments amount to twenty million dollars, while ours are nearly five hundred million dollars, a sum that equals more than three fourths the value of all the mineral properties in the country. We own two thirds of the smelters and an equal proportion of the petroleum now being developed and have put many millions into lands, factories, and other industries. We have more than one hundred million in timber lands, ranches, and farms.

The Mexican investments in live stock are more than five times those of the Americans. They have also large holdings in houses and personal property and they do the bulk of the real-estate business. They own many of the hotels, theatres, and breweries and about half of the bank stock, the remainder of which is chiefly in the hands of the French.

Our newspapers frequently publish reports that the Japanese are trying to get control of the Mexican lands. As a matter of fact, all the land held by them is worth no more than three quarters of a million dollars. The Chinese have two thirds as much.

The Mexican oil fields are among the richest of the world. An actual count recently made showed that three hundred oil companies had been organized for developing them. Of these the American firms were in the great majority both in number and assets, with the British interests next, followed by the Dutch, the Spanish, and the Mexicans. The disputes between our own government and the various administrations in Mexico both during and since the revolutions have grown largely out of the treatment of the oil companies by the Mexican authorities. At present, not including the undeveloped lands, the Americans own oil properties conservatively estimated at more than a quarter of a billion dollars.

In addition to all these forms of wealth, our people have millions in Mexican government bonds, coal lands, lumber, and manufacturing of one kind and another. The British and Canadians own most of the light, power, and tramway companies, having invested in them to the value of more than one hundred millions.

At the beginning of the revolutionary period, the total foreign population of Mexico was more than one hundred thousand. Of these about three fourths were from Spain, Guatemala, and the United States and the remainder were British, French, and German in the order named. These proportions still hold good, but, owing to the destruction of property and the closing down of mines, ranches, and smelters, the number has been decreased by more than one half.

The Spaniards control the grocery and grain trades of the Republic. There are also many Spanish professional men and clerks, bookkeepers, and farmers. The French have the wholesale and retail dry goods and jewellery stores. They own most of the cotton mills and have put more than three million dollars into tobacco factories. The Germans control the hardware trade and own a number of plantations. The English have made large investments in mines, railroads, farms, and oil.

Most of the American interests are held by corporations accustomed to do things on a big scale. The capitalization of many of the companies is figured in tens and even hundreds of millions. The holdings in lands are enormous. In one list of foreign enterprises I find that seven of the American firms each owns more than a million acres and dozens of others control tracts of one hundred thousand acres and more. The largest holdings are those of the cattle, lumber, and rubber companies. Claims for damages to American properties, growing out of the revolutionary disturbances, have been estimated to amount to nearly half a billion dollars. No one expects such a huge sum will be collected, but the figure emphasizes the magnitude of our interests in Mexico. It also explains why the official relations between Washington and Mexico City will be somewhat complicated for decades to come.

With the many big companies already in the field it is foolish to suppose that the real opportunities to make money in Mexico will ever go begging. Nevertheless, every period of prosperity brings into being fraudulent schemes to catch the little investor. Oftentimes the stock of such companies is sold with the promise of profits of from two hundred to five hundred per cent. Such companies are usually frauds pure and simple, and the man who buys these stocks is sure to lose his money.

Many of the Americans interested in Mexican properties are on the ground to look after them. There are hundreds of miners, and engineers of all kinds. The chicle industry, which keeps millions of jaws chewing gum, has been developed entirely by men and money from the United States.

Indeed, the record of Americans here is unique. I am told that every oil well has been drilled by an American, and that American workmen have set up every piece of machinery used in the mines. For many years the railroads were managed by Americans who filled all the better paid positions, from superintendents to conductors and firemen. The Mexicans now operating the railroad machinery and equipment got their training under Americans. Our doctors and dentists are especially successful, the latter often putting peas of silver amalgam into Mexicans' mouths and taking pumpkins of gold out of their pockets. Every large city has its American colony, and an American boarding house, usually run by a woman from the States, is often to be found in the largest towns. Many Americans live in the capital and a constant procession of others visits that city on business or pleasure. Some act as sales agents for American corporations, and a lesser number have wholesale and retail selling establishments. The Americans have two clubs in Mexico City, the University Club in the Colonia section, and the Country Club, where they go to loaf and play golf.

In addition to the above eminently respectable class of Americans who have skill, money, and brains, there are some of a far different type. We have a few Americans in Mexico who have left the United States under a cloud and we have some who have come in with chips on their shoulders. They call the Mexicans "Greasers," and do not hesitate to wound the feelings of a people naturally

Cotton manufacturing, which has developed more than any other machine industry in Mexico, is controlled chiefly by the French. The Rio Blanco and other large mills are located at Orizaba.

The Mexicans call Tampico, "Gringolandia" because it is so predominantly American. Office buildings, banks, hotels, railways, and oil tanks and pipelines all proclaim Yankee enterprise. The Americans have even injected some of their energy into the native labourer.

Upon her British- and American-built railroads largely depends the future development of Mexico's vast resources and the rise of the peon to more profitable employment and a better condition in life.

polite. These "Gringoes," as the Mexicans call them, have had much to do with keeping alive the ill feeling between the two countries.

Even the peons are polite, and our bluff ways are disagreeable to them. Many Americans do not understand how to handle the native labourer, and often offend him without knowing just why. Others, who act more considerately, make friends with the people and enjoy the respect and liking of those in their employ.

The question is often asked as to whether the Mexicans as a people like us or not. If you put this to a Mexican gentleman he will say yes, and add that his country looks to ours for its development and culture. He will show you that many of the boys and girls who go abroad to be educated are sent to the United States and that we have the bulk of Mexico's trade. On the other hand, the real Mexican is a mixture of Spaniard and Indian, and a good hard scratch reveals the latter. I do not believe the Mexican has much love for the American. He is jealous and covets our ability to do big things and to make money. He is frightened by the rapid increase of American investments and in his soul believes we mean to take possession of his country. The more we protest, the greater he thinks our hypocrisy. Moreover, some of the upper classes have a contempt for business and business men. They would rather be poorly paid government clerks or the hangers-on of the rich *hacendados* than mine managers at five thousand dollars a year. Since the revolution this attitude has been considerably changed as many of the aristocracy were then forced to leave Mexico and have never returned.

THE END

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